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ABSTRACT

Seven conference papers discuss English language training and political development in Asia, including language project design and evaluation, counterparting, sustainability, appropriate technology, and languages and the politics of development. Papers included are: "Linguistic and Cultural Considerations of Writing ELT Texts for Use in Asia" (Richard Colebrook); "Keeping a Cool Heart: Designing for Change at the Vientiane School of Law" (Steve Epstein); "Reconciling Stakeholders' Perspectives in Designing a University ESP Programme" (Wanpen Tubtimtong); "ESP Methodology for Science Lecturers" (Angela Rogers and Cukup Mulyana); "Language Teacher Education by Distance Mode: A Pilot Programme in Thailand" (Rachanee Senisrisant); "Study Mode Negotiation" (Mani Le Vasan and Rajeswary Sargunan); and "Quality Communication in Hospitality: Language Skills or Culture Transfer?" (Peggy Leung and Terence Lo). (Contains chapter references.) (NAV)

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ESP in Southeast Asia

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Edited by

Tony Crooks
Indonesia Australia Language Foundation

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The IALF is a self-supporting, non-profit educational institution that exists to promote national development in Indonesia and elsewhere in Southeast Asia through the provision of high-quality language services. It operates language centres in Jakarta and Bali, and through its Projects Unit supports teachers and consultants throughout Indonesia and the region. The IALF is the Founding Chair of the Association for Language and Development in Asia.

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Editor's introduction

The seven papers in this volume were all originally presented at the Second International Conference on Language in Development, which was held in Bali, Indonesia from 10-12 April 1995.

The Conference was organized by the Indonesia Australia Language Foundation (IALF), in collaboration with the Bangkok-based Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research (NCELTR) of Macquarie University, Sydney. It was conceived as a follow-up to the first such Conference, hosted by AIT in 1993, where the idea emerged that the topic was of sufficient importance to justify a biennial seminar, which would be rotated through the countries of the region.

The theme of the Bali Conference was "Language and Communication in Development: Stakeholders' Perspectives". The majority of the papers presented focused on the development aspect of this theme, dealing with such issues as language project design and evaluation, counterparting, sustainability, appropriate technology, and language and the politics of development: a collection of 16 of these papers has been published under the title *Language and Development* (Crooks & Crewes 1995).

A minority of the papers, however, fronted the language issues, dealing with topics such as language curriculum, needs analysis, mode of delivery and teacher education - within the context of the education system of a developing country. On further reflection it became apparent that the most interesting and useful of these papers were linked not only by the Conference theme but also by a concern with some aspect or domain of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) - an indication, perhaps, of the importance that has long been attached to ESP in this region.

These six papers form the core of this collection, which has been augmented through the addition of the final paper by Leung & Lo. Hong Kong is not (yet) a developing country, nor is it strictly speaking in Southeast Asia; nevertheless the merits of Leung & Lo's paper, along with its considerable overlap with the other contributions in terms of subject matter, ensure that it will not be out of place in the present volume.

The seven papers have been selected for publication on the basis of general interest and utilitarian value. On the one hand, collectively they represent a tableau of ESP activity in a number of countries in the region that are at various stages of development, both educationally and economically: Lao PDR, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Hong Kong. On the other hand, they each have a highly practical focus, dealing as they do with the procedural and operational aspects of ESP teaching and administration. Their publication here is intended to provide a hands-on resource for the ESP practitioner.

The opening contribution is perhaps the *least* specific paper in the collection - at least in terms of geographical location. **Richard Colebrook** outlines some of the linguistic, cultural and political issues he faced in designing an English language course to be used in military language centres throughout a number of countries of Southeast Asia. Strongly influenced by the ideas of Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994), the paper first challenges the cultural assumptions implicit in mainstream ELT methodology and materials design, and argues for an approach to text-writing that positions the Asian non-native speaker as the "self" within the text. In the second, more practical part of his paper, the author discusses some of the means by which he has attempted to address issues of culture and context in his own course design work.

In the second paper, **Steve Epstein** provides us with a rare glimpse into English language teaching and learning in Lao PDR, through his account of how the English Department of the School of Law in Vientiane has sought to adapt to meet the needs of a legal system that is itself still in a state of flux. The paper looks first at the teacher development strategies that have been implemented in the Department, and then goes on to discuss efforts to prepare the learners to play their role in a changing system through developing in them the empowering skills of critical thinking, research techniques and the reading habit.

Epstein's awareness of the need for ESP training to match the demands of the system the language learner is preparing to enter is shared by **Wanpen Tubtimtong**. Noting changes in the expectations of Thai industry regarding the English language skills of science and engineering graduates, Tubtimtong conducted a survey of perceptions of graduates' English language needs among three stakeholder groups in the relevant faculties

of her university: the deans of the faculties, the subject lecturers, and the students themselves. She reports here on the main findings of her survey, and describes how such findings were used in the redesign of an existing ESP course. She concludes with a call for a re-examination of the existing language policy at her university and a proposal for a restructuring of the graduate English program along lines intended to achieve the higher standards being demanded by industry.

Shifting the focus on to the ESP *teacher*, **Angela Rogers and Cukup Mulyana** respond to the question of whether or not subject specialists can be trained to teach ESP with an emphatic "yes". With reference to an initiative at an Indonesian state university, they outline the stages involved in training a group of science lecturers in appropriate language teaching methodology and materials selection and design. The authors discuss student reaction to the pilot course and, in view of the positive feedback obtained, commend their model of ESP delivery through subject lecturers working in consultation and collaboration with a language specialist.

Staying with the topic of teacher-training, **Rachanee Senisrisant** reports on the outcomes of another pilot course, this one a language teacher education program delivered by distance mode. The situation she describes in her native Thailand, where teachers in rural areas lack access to the professional development opportunities available in the capital city, is one that is common to many of the countries of Southeast Asia. Consequently, her positive evaluation of the distance program, along with her assessment of the factors contributing to its success, are likely to be of interest to teachers and teacher educators throughout the region.

The last two papers in the collection are written by ESP specialists working in two of the most developed countries in the region - Malaysia and (allowing for a degree of artistic licence with the orthodoxy of regional geography) Hong Kong. It is not surprising, therefore, to see in these two papers a greater concern with the provision of language services to the corporate sector. **Mani Le Vasan and Rajeswary Sargunan** draw attention to the recent increase in the use of the term *language training industry*, which they view as an indicator of a shift in ELT towards an increased awareness on the part of the language teaching/research community of the goals and value systems of their client communities and a consequent move to reconsider its own aims

and perspectives. Central to the redefined relationship between the providers of ELT services and their clients is the process of negotiation; the main focus of this paper, then, is an outline of the authors' model of study mode negotiation.

Finally, the domain of interest for **Peggy Leung and Terence Lo** is the hospitality industry in Hong Kong. Their paper examines the changing nature of language at work in the service industries in general, and the language of service in the field of hospitality in particular, and highlights the need for "communication convergence" in the service encounter as a means of achieving client satisfaction. The pedagogical implication, the authors argue, is the need to incorporate a substantial cross-cultural communication component into the hospitality language curriculum. The paper concludes with a call for language learning to be construed essentially as a linguistic experience of culture transfer.

It will be evident from this overview of the collection that the present volume offers a rich Southeast Asian perspective on a range of issues relating to the practice of ESP. Though the teaching and learning contexts described in the papers vary widely, there is an underlying unity to the collection that bears out Hutchinson & Waters' (1987: 16) observation that ESP is "approach not product". It is our hope that the volume will provide a useful source of information on how ESP educators and administrators in Southeast Asia are currently addressing their shared goal of developing a sound basis for their professional practices, and that it will be of interest to language professionals both within the region and beyond.

Tony Crooks

Bali, February 1996

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Linguistic and cultural considerations of writing ELT texts for use in Asia

Richard Colebrook

Abstract: *Throughout the Asian region, non-English-speaking background (NESB) teachers of English grapple with state-of-the-art communicative materials designed by native speakers for a principally native speaker teacher audience. The materials and methodology of ELT usually overlook the fact that the language proficiency of the teacher using the materials may be less than native-like; and the issue of developing (or adapting) effective ELT materials for use by NESB teachers receives scant attention on teacher-training programs. Should NESB teachers of English be the focus of specially-designed materials, or should they simply be expected to use the standard, commercially-available range of "communicative" materials? How relevant is the content of ELT textbooks to the "needs" of Asian students of English?*

The Defence International Training Centre in Australia has had to confront these issues in embarking upon a project to design a communicative English language course for NESB teachers working in defence force language centres in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. This action research paper describes the process of developing the Australian English Language Course, and discusses some of the methodological and curriculum issues which have had to be addressed in the writing of a course intended for use by NESB teachers throughout the Southeast Asian region.

Language, culture and context

A recent article entitled "The need for a cross-cultural approach to teaching EFL" by Mongi Bahloul (1994), a teacher of English from Tunisia, argues that foreign English language (EL) teachers' insistence on using communicative teaching methods and their inability to accept local classroom practices and learning styles stems from a lack of cross-cultural understanding. Bahloul calls for a cross-cultural approach to teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in which EFL supports, rather than works against, the host country's culture and education system.

The article provoked an acrimonious response from Mary Schieppregell (1994: 4), an American Professor of Linguistics and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), who rejects outright Bahloul's viewpoint on the grounds that it "confuses cultural understanding and pedagogy and denies the real cross-cultural approach that is an inevitable result of having foreign teachers in language education".

"Asking foreign teachers", she continues, "to adopt methods that they believe to be ineffective, and calling this a cross-cultural approach, makes a mockery of professionalism." The letter concludes prophetically with an unequivocally deterministic prediction about EFL and its place in the world:

> In the end, foreign [EFL] teachers will bring new ways of teaching in to the educational systems of other countries...the presence of foreign teachers can stimulate dialogue among educators about what works well and what can be improved in English teaching, for the benefit of the students.

Schieppregell's claim that Bahloul has confused cultural understanding and pedagogy suggests that "pedagogy" exists in some pure form outside the realm of culture. But she also suggests that, through what she describes as "the real cross-cultural approach that is the inevitable result of having foreign teachers in language education", some form of cultural adjustment will occur "for the benefit of the students". If there is any confusion here, it appears to lie with the professor's understanding of the complex relationship between language, culture and context - a relationship which her discipline has rationalized through its construction of the service it offers, English language training (ELT), as "natural, neutral and beneficial".

The issue of cultural appropriacy of ELT materials and methodology in foreign contexts raises the ethical question of whether native speakers have the right to dictate the terms of how "their" language is taught and, in so doing, to impose their pedagogical values and systems on other cultures. The monopolization of ELT professional practice by native speaker text-writers and teachers has far-reaching implications, not only in terms of how English is taught, but also in terms of the cultural and political values that permeate the content of the so-called "authentic texts" used in EL instruction. However, over and above the *ethical* considerations of whether native speakers have the right to

prescribe content and methodology, is the basic *pedagogical* issue of whether these current universalist approaches of the ELT industry towards language education do what they claim to do - that is, to offer the most effective means for students to learn English *in all situations*. A growing body of research is beginning to challenge the appropriacy of universalist approaches to teaching English in bilingual and non-English-speaking background (NESB) teaching environments (e.g. McGroaty 1992, 1995; Auerbach 1993; Gillespie 1994).

As insights from comparative education (e.g. Biggs 1994) have shown us, normative approaches to pedagogy and evaluative comments about other pedagogies (such as those made by Schieppregell regarding the Tunisian educational system) need to be acknowledged in foreign educational settings as *perceptions* rather than universal truths. It is indeed difficult to detach ourselves from our own biases about how language "should" be taught - to accept the notion that, in education, many roads may lead to Rome...and that those same roads may also lead to a multitude of other destinations.

For example, "rote-learning" is generally eschewed by most contemporary western educators as a low-level, non-interactive cognitive activity, so much so that not only is it proscribed as a legitimate approach to teaching, but it is also used as the basis for a deficit model (Ballard & Clancy 1984). The common preference of Asian students for this mode of learning is ascribed to their coming from "reproductive" intellectual traditions, and being unable to adapt to our enlightened, "extensive" tradition. We have rigidly adhered to such perceptions of Asian learning styles in the face of considerable evidence that students from these educational environments actually achieve higher results than western students both at home and overseas (Sue & Okazaki 1990, cited in Biggs 1994).

This is not to suggest that one approach to learning is better than another, but simply to illustrate that these approaches need to be seen as culture- and context-dependent. The pedagogical context will reflect certain preferred learning styles, which are both conscious and intuitive. Research indicates that students and teachers will choose strategies on the basis of particular affective, cognitive and learning styles (Reid 1987), or as a result of socialization into a particular educational culture (Guild & Garger 1985; Young 1987).

NESB teachers, the EFL publishing industry and CLT

The issue of language, context and culture has received considerable attention from academics (e.g. Widdowson 1991; Kramsch 1994), although this work appears to have had no perceivable effect on the international "one suits all" approach of the EFL textbook publishing industry. Besides failing to address adequately the cultural dimension in language learning, monocultural international EFL textbooks, produced as they are by native speakers of English for a principally native speaker teacher audience, overlook the practical constraints of using these materials in different educational settings. The issue of how to develop (or adapt) ELT materials for use by NESB teachers is a problematic and generally ignored question in materials development - even though the vast majority of learners currently studying English throughout the world are taught by NESB teachers. Unlike the situation that pertains in the teaching of second languages other than English (LOTE) - where practical solutions have been applied to the problem of a lack of native speaker teachers - the "one suits all" materials and methodology of ELT usually overlook the point that the language proficiency of the teacher using the materials may be less than native-like.

Since such is the case, should NESB teachers of English be the focus of specially-designed materials, or should they simply be expected to use the standard, commercially-available range of "communicative" materials? Given that the rich and diverse range of materials produced by the ELT publishing industry caters for the "needs" of just about everyone except the NESB teacher of English, it seems that the second of these alternatives represents the prevalent attitude towards the problem. After all, one of the central precepts of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is that it is the *learner* rather than the *teacher* who is at the centre of the learning process; it is therefore reasonable to expect that NESB teachers with good communicative teaching skills and materials should become effective language-learning facilitators - or at least such is the basic tenet of EFL teacher-training in NESB environments...It sounds good in theory, but does it work?

In practice, it seems that many NESB teachers of EFL (including those who have been intensively trained in CLT methodology) shy away from communicative materials in favour of more traditional, structural approaches, which they believe allow them to work within the constraints

of their linguistic proficiency and to perform their role in the classroom more effectively[1]. Is this simply a problem of a "negative attitude" towards the ideals of CLT (a common complaint from teacher-trainers), or does the problem relate to a mismatch between, on the one hand, the demands on the teachers implicit in the materials and, on the other, the teachers' level of EL proficiency (in other words, is it a linguistic problem over and above the effect of different learning style orientations)?

Parameters of EFL text production: political and pedagogical

The ready acceptance by the ELT profession of the status quo of ELT text production, together with an adherence to the practice of monolingual teaching strategies and a dismissal of the educative function of the students' first language (L1) in the classroom, although seemingly normal to most ELT practitioners, represents what Auerbach (1993: 25) describes as "the tip of an ideological iceberg". Following Phillipson's (1992) linguistic imperialism thesis, Auerbach suggests (*ibid.*) that these ingrained professional practices are part of an ideological orientation which

> privileges the interests of dominant groups and reinforces inequalities...This in turn has diverted attention away from the development of local solutions to pedagogical problems and impeded the process of building on local strengths, resulting in the creation of ideological dependence.

The established parameters of mainstream EFL text production are therefore indubitably economic and political.

Putting aside the complex political processes involved in EFL text production as it exists and looking at a pedagogical ideal to escape this impasse, it is clear that two questions need to be addressed with regard to the textual planning of EL instruction in Asian educational settings:

(i) what *should* happen (in a cultural sense, given different cultural contexts); and

(ii) what *can* happen (in a pedagogical sense, given different pedagogical contexts).

These two questions raise a number of interrelated cultural, linguistic and pedagogical issues, which challenge the assumption that a universal approach is always appropriate to particular educational settings, and form the normative and practical parameters for language textbook design. These issues will be discussed in more detail below, but for the moment they may be summarized as follows:

What should happen?

What educational approach should be used?
What content should be selected?
What models should be used?

What can happen?

Can the text work effectively in the local educational context?
Can the local teachers use the text effectively?
Can the text address students' "needs" in the local context?

Figure 1: Normative and practical parameters for textbook design

Critical studies of the cultural content of EFL texts

Although still far below a level likely to cause concern to either the publishers or the ELT profession, a growing body of research is beginning to analyze critically the cultural assumptions in ELT methodology and materials design.

At a general level, writers such as Candlin (1989) and Kramsch (1994) argue that current approaches to culture and context in EFL materials, as well as assumptions about the connection between language and culture, are seriously inadequate. Candlin (*art.cit.*: 1) argues that:

> the connections between the language of a culture and the culture itself have often been asserted in the pedagogical literature (and especially in the coursebooks of schools) to be simply correlational, indeed frequently reduced to the lexification of curious behaviours, or the

> providing of inventories of appropriate phrases whose reasons for appropriateness, sources and constitutive sociologies have remained quite opaque.

The notion of "authentic texts" (meaning texts generated by native speakers in the target language culture) as a necessary part of the path to communicative competence has recently been directly challenged by several writers (Widdowson 1991; Kramsch 1994; Oda 1995). The authentic text is a central source of material for the modern EFL textbook. However, a number of questions are left begging. What, for instance, determines whether a text is authentic or not? What does the authentic text represent? Is our selection of authentic texts affected by the linguistic and cultural norms that affect our selection of other linguistic models? Kramsch (*op.cit.*: 178) argues that:

> with the increased necessity to develop not only communicative but cultural competence in language teaching, the need has grown to reassess the notion of authentic text and communicative authenticity.

We can no longer assume that the "cultural competence" of native speakers of English in western countries necessarily equates with the cultural competence related to the use of English in "other" contexts around the world - contexts where, as a second language, English has quite different functions from the idealized world of the EFL text.

Specific criticisms of EFL texts have been made from a number of perspectives. Prodromou (1988: 76), for example, notes that:

> globally-designed textbooks have continued to be stubbornly Anglocentric: appealing to a world market as they do, they cannot by definition draw upon local varieties of English.

For Prodromou, the content of the EFL text is "vacuous, empty of life", presenting what amounts to a "cardboard cut-out world". Alptekin (1993) uses a psycholinguistic analysis of target-language culture in EFL materials, arguing that writers' unconscious operation within particular frames of schematic knowledge results in texts which place unnecessary additional cognitive demands on students from language backgrounds based on different schemata. Illustrations in ELT materials pose a similar schematic problem, according to Hewings (1991).

Although some writers have approached the issue from an ethical position (e.g. Brown 1990; Heiman 1994), seeing the EFL text as "imposing western values", most of the problems in the EFL text, such as "stereotyping" (Clarke & Clarke 1990), or "inappropriate content" (Ozog 1989) are identified as isolated, text-related problems rather than part of a systemic discursive practice. In other words, criticism has generally only occurred within the linguistic domain of ELT's professional discourse rather than in terms of the broader implications.

In addressing the essentially political nature of language teaching, Pennycook (1994), however, argues that the problem of the EFL textbook extends beyond the issue of textual inappropriacy to broader political issues (*op.cit.*: 178):

> English language teaching beliefs, practices and materials are never neutral, and indeed represent very particular understandings of language, communication, learning, education and so on. Such understandings, in turn, are also not merely random views but rather are very much part of a broader range of discursive and cultural practices that emanate from the "West". The issue, therefore, is not only one of showing the non-neutrality of such views, but also of showing that language teaching practices are connected in a complex reciprocal relationship to the expansion of English and other forms of culture and knowledge.

According to Pennycook, the real significance of Prodromou's criticism of the "cardboard cut-out world" of the EFL text is not only that the text is trivial (and therefore pedagogically inappropriate for adult learners), but that it presents the complexities of the world within a simplified *western* framework. A similar criticism could be levelled at Alptekin's psycholinguistic analysis in that, by considering the problem from a pedagogical perspective at the level of "text" and reader, the analysis misses the broader discursive framework which generates such schematic frameworks in the text.

The *Australian English Language Course*

The Defence International Training Centre (DITC) in Australia has had to confront these questions in embarking upon a project to design an EL course for NESB teachers of English working in military language centres in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. DITC

was commissioned by the Australian Government to develop the *Australian English Language Course* (*AELC*), an intermediate EL course of 400 hours' duration, as part of efforts to extend Australian defence cooperation throughout the Southeast Asian region. For the *AELC* to gain acceptance, it was important that it could hold its own against the *American Language Course* (*ALC*), which has become well-established in language centres throughout the region. The initial approach taken by the course writers was to make the course as "communicative" as possible, but they had to consider that the *ALC*, a more traditional, structure-based course, was a familiar and well-liked text in these educational settings. (Structural approaches to language instruction are more compatible with the military training mode of instruction, although defence force language centres have, in recent years, shown interest in integrating communicative methodology into their language training programs.) The general level of EL proficiency of the teachers who will use the *AELC* ranges from lower- to upper-intermediate. Although a few hold tertiary teaching qualifications, most have been trained as language instructors within military instructor training programs.

The remaining pages of this paper describe the process of developing the *AELC* to its current point of completion[2], and discuss some of the methodological and curriculum issues that have had to be addressed in the writing of a task-based EL course intended for use by NESB teachers throughout the Southeast Asian region.

As the primary aim of the *AELC* is to prepare learners for study in Australia, some of the content is quite specific to the Australian variety of English, addressing issues such as Australian slang, dialectal variations and cultural conventions. However, although the course *is* distinctly Australian, the *AELC* writers were mindful of the fact that mainstream EFL texts fall seriously short in terms of taking into consideration the actual context in which instruction occurs. To develop a course that challenged the ethnocentrism so apparent in mainstream EFL texts and that was as relevant as possible to Asian educational settings became a major priority in designing the text. Extensive trialling and consultation with the teachers who would use the course became an integral part of the writing process. Thus, although the text has a specific institutional function (working within the paradigm of defence cooperation), the project does raise important linguistic and cultural issues which need to considered in the design of ELT materials for other local settings in the Asian region.

The approach taken by the *AELC* writing team was to develop a task-based syllabus, based on authentic texts from various Australian and Asian sources. The spoken texts were to be unscripted and as "authentic" as possible, using a variety of Australian English speakers and speakers of English from Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. This seemed appropriate, not only as the text was to be used in the Asian region, but also because an "Australian English" course should reflect the linguistic diversity of Australia as a multicultural society - a society which, in political rhetoric at least, is beginning to accept itself as part of the Asian region. It also seemed to us that traditional linguistic descriptions of Australian English (such as the "broad - cultivated" classification) were inadequate representations of the variety of language use in Australia, and it was therefore decided that the text should resist the normative approach of other ELT texts in presenting standardized (Anglo-Saxon) dialect models.

Do NESB teachers really need what they say they need?

The first draft of Book 1 of the course was trialled in August 1994 by teachers from the client countries. This was followed by a one-month workshop in which a smaller group reviewed and made recommendations about the structure and format of the *Teachers' Notes*.

Much was learnt by observing the *AELC* materials being trialled. For example, where the ubiquitous direction to "discuss" appears in EFL textbooks, native speaker text-writers may easily overlook how much teacher input is required to initiate and direct an apparently straightforward linguistic exchange. In the text trials, it became apparent that many of the open-ended discussion activities we had designed simply did not work - and the teachers felt uncomfortable using them. The writers realized that discussions do not simply "happen" and, without a proficient conversation facilitator, additional support may be needed from the text. Similarly, when we noticed teachers beginning questions in a pre-reading task with the words: "What means...?", something which would normally be perceived by a teacher-trainer as an error on the part of the teacher, it was regarded in this case as a problem not with the teacher, but with the text - an exercise which had to be re-designed to make it more "user-friendly" to the NESB teacher.

Having reviewed the clients' recommendations regarding the first draft, and having arrived at the point where a final text format had to be decided upon, the question arose as to what extent those recommendations should be followed. The needs data gathered in the workshop was most useful in reformulating our ideas about the practical parameters of what would work, and assisted in the development of better *Teachers' Notes*, preparatory tasks and support materials; however, the procedure of needs analysis could not provide a complete picture of how to go about developing an EFL text that would be most appropriate to the target teaching environments.

We needed to examine not only our own subjectivity, but also the subjectivity of the clients within the broader discursive frameworks involved. In particular, we needed to question *why* they seemed so ready to embrace linguistic norms and teaching practices which placed them at a disadvantage - such as their declared preference for "English-only" classrooms, native over "non-native" models, and linguistic "correctness" in the form of non-variable centralized norms. Many EFL practitioners might no doubt take the attitude: "Well - if that's what they want, why not give it to them?" As has already been made clear, we acknowledge the importance of respecting different pedagogical preferences; but, in providing the clients with *what they believe to be correct* about the English language, would we merely be serving the process of cultural reproduction?

Herein lies one of the central epistemological impasses in our profession. We might ask our students "what they need", but in practice such needs analysis tends to occur only within the linguistic paradigm: "What parts of *my* language do you think you need?", rather than a critical assessment of textbook content and its pedagogical applications in specific settings. Needs analysis, like other positivist approaches in Applied Linguistics, examines observable phenomena with the scientific detachment of a diagnosis, as if the "need" to study English were some fixed transparent property or condition waiting to be discovered. The observable phenomena, the students' immediate linguistic need to gain English for a particular purpose and their expression of *what they say they need*, become the point of analysis - without considering any further the processes which led to that declaration of "need". If we were really concerned about "needs", we would have to look beyond the linguistic domain of content and methodology to the area of "text", in terms of

a critical analysis of the political and cultural effect of the particular texts we intend to use and their related discursive practices in particular settings. Given the potency of British and American cultural hegemony throughout the world today and its obvious connection to the growth of interest in learning English, it is even possible that, if such questions of content were raised in an EFL needs analysis, students would be quite agreeable (and would perhaps even expect) to learn about Queen Elizabeth, Michael Jackson, or the exploits of an international jet-setter.

Examined at a discoursal level, then, it is certainly not surprising that the predominant role of the native speaker and centralized linguistic norms are reflected in the declared preferences of NESB teachers and students of English.

Challenging discursive practices

The need to respect local cultural perspectives and, at the same time, to challenge centralized linguistic controls and discursive formations is a highly complex issue, and one for which there is clearly no single solution. As Pennycook (1994) has noted, the liberation of the "conditions of possibility" of English throughout Asia can only be achieved by considering the cultural politics of the local context as well as the broader global aspects of the English language.

It was only through a critical analysis of the discursive practices surrounding the task of developing the *AELC* that a clearer picture emerged of the real issues we were dealing with - issues of power surrounding the positioning of "self" and an "other" within professional practice and within the EFL text itself: fundamental issues of opposition between native speaker and non-native speaker, L1 as a medium of instruction and "English-only" classrooms, and so on.

It seems that in the LOTE text (in contradistinction to the EFL text), a completely different "self-other" relationship is operating. In LOTE text, the non-native teacher is the subject of a methodology which recognizes that the teacher has limited proficiency in the target language. The professional discourse of LOTE has therefore positioned the concepts of the *native speaker* and *L1 as a medium of instruction* quite differently to ELT. This difference is immediately apparent not only in the structure

of the LOTE text, but also in the professional literature of LOTE (e.g. McKay 1994). The "self-other" relationship in LOTE is also quite different with regard to cultural content, positioning the "foreigner" studying the "foreign language" as the "self", and the target language as the "other" (language).

Discourse itself appears to be the main barrier to developing more effective teaching strategies for NESB teachers of English. Challenging the discursive tenets of the "native speaker" and the "English-only" classroom raises questions about a number of other discursive practices related to this "self-other" discourse - a relationship described by Said (1994), in his analysis of the western novel, as a "structure of attitude and reference". An application of Said's analysis to the EFL text indicates the necessity of developing critical approaches towards EFL text design - approaches that challenge the discursive practices that EFL teachers have come to regard as normal and "commonsense".

For these reasons it was decided to go against the clients' request for standardized models and to include both Asian speakers of English and Asian writers within the text content. As the text had to serve several countries in the region it was not possible, for practical reasons, to include L1 in the text; however, every effort was made in other ways to position the Asian non-native speaker as a subject within the text.

Conclusion

Applied Linguistics acknowledges the urgent need for "real" data, above and beyond its idealized expectations of linguistic models, as a means of testing its theories of how languages are learnt and indicating how these theories might relate to actual teaching practices. Nunan (1987), for example, argues the need for descriptive, classroom-based research to document present realities. As ELT spreads throughout the Asian region, it is vital to gather data not only from the EFL classroom in English-speaking environments (the source of most current data), but also from the EFL classroom where the teacher is a non-native speaker - the place where most language learning occurs and will occur in the future world of "English as an International Language".

Developing different teaching materials for NESB teachers need not mean a "trade-off" in pedagogical ideals since, while it is generally assumed that language is best taught by a native speaker, the non-native teacher may, as Phillipson (1992) and Auerbach (1993) argue, be a more effective facilitator (particularly at lower levels of instruction) than the native speaker, by bringing special cultural and linguistic knowledge and insights to the classroom. Monolingual texts designed by native speakers fail to draw upon this valuable source of input. In order to develop EFL texts which are effective and meaningful teaching aids in Asian environments, it is vital that text-writers abandon Anglocentric models and begin to address the actual context in which the language will be learnt and used.

Notes

1. This assertion is based both on discussions with NESB teachers on teacher development courses at DITC and on data gathered in a questionnaire addressing this issue at the *AELC* Workshop in June 1994, in which client teachers were asked to review the suitability of the *AELC* text and other materials to their teaching environments.

2. The *AELC* comprises three books. At the time of writing (April 1995) Books 1 and 2 were nearing completion. The project is due to be completed by December 1995.

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Keeping a cool heart: designing for change at the Vientiane School of Law

Steve Epstein

Abstract: *How to design an English language program to prepare graduates for a career in the legal system when it is not clear what the legal system will be by the time they graduate? What strategies to employ in order to prepare teachers and students for inevitable change? This paper outlines the changes that have taken place in the legal system of Lao PDR and consequently in the Vientiane School of Law, and describes the strategies that have been engaged to deal with these changes.*

Changes in the Lao legal system and the School of Law

In the late 1980s the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) transformed the centrally-governed economy into a market economy. As a result, it became necessary to institute a revised legal structure more appropriate to the "New Economic Mechanism", in order to accommodate the new system and to encourage investment. The present legal system was adopted in 1991 with the promulgation of the constitution and the adoption of the civil and penal codes and procedures. The Vientiane School of Law was established in 1986 to provide the future legal system with a group of professionals trained in Law.

Lao PDR has a population pyramid similar to sub-Saharan Africa: 44% of the population is under fifteen years old and 17.5% is below the age of five[1]. This has resulted in increasing pressure on tertiary education institutions to accept more and more students. Lao high schools continue to graduate students ready for further education, and the burgeoning youth of the nation need places to study. Until 1990, the majority of high school graduates who went on to higher education had studied in the (then) Soviet Union or Eastern Europe, but following the upheavals in the former Communist bloc, this is no longer an option.

Thus it was that in 1993 the School of Law began to admit classes of 200 students, while previously the average had been 60. However, the Lao legal infrastructure can easily absorb the growing numbers of graduates. Through to the year 2001 graduates of the School of Law are assured positions in the state judicial administration due to the pressing need for trained judges, lawyers and prosecutors (Ministry of Justice 1992). There is also expected to be an increase in demand for law school graduates in the private sector.

The structure and program of the School of Law have undergone a dramatic transformation in response both to the increased training need and to the larger student population. From the establishment of the School until 1993, students had been divided into two levels: the four-year high-level program which trained judges, lawyers, and prosecutors, and the three-year middle-level program which trained lower-echelon court officials and administrators. This two-level model was based on the French system. As the high-level and middle-level programs were not substantially different in content, and as separating the students into nine different groups became increasingly difficult administratively, the two-level system was abandoned in 1993, and the students were merged and regrouped into one four-year program. In 1994, the four-year program was extended to five years and a preparatory year was added, effectively making it a six-year program.

The English Department at the School of Law was established in April 1993 with the appointment of an advisor funded by the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA). Previously, all students had studied either Russian or French; however, response to the English classes was overwhelming, and now approximately 70% of the students study English, with the remaining 30% taking French. Even though most of the Law faculty studied in the Soviet Union and the School of Law has a large library of Russian-language books, the Russian program has been discontinued due to lack of interest. By way of contrast, the School currently has 580 English students in 22 classes and eight full-time English teachers.

Design for change: teacher-training

Focused training of the English teachers is the key to developing staff

that will be able to cope with the inevitable changes that will occur both in the School of Law and in the Lao legal system. Upgrading the teachers' own ability in English, guiding them in developing their own effective style of teaching, and providing them with legal knowledge will build the confidence needed to "roll with the punches". Accordingly, staff development in the English Department comprises three strands: English language, teaching methodology, and legal knowledge.

Training is a powerful motivator for the teachers. The salary of a state sector teacher does not compare with the rewards of the private sector. The Government is justifiably concerned that state-system English teachers will move to higher-paying jobs in the private sector. An extensive and long-term training program is an incentive that will benefit both the teachers and the School. All eight teachers in the English Department are enrolled in a long-term internationally-recognized program which will result in their obtaining at least a Graduate Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), with some going on to complete a Masters degree.

In addition to the long-term training program, the English Department teachers participate in weekly team meetings and training sessions, a peer observation program, and individual consultations with the advisor. They also attend special English classes where they develop their language skills and are at the same time exposed to different teaching methodologies; this arrangement has resulted in a substantial improvement in the teachers' own methodology and classroom management skills.

The project has been less successful in its goal of helping the English teachers gain an understanding of legal matters. Although the teachers have visited the Lao courts and have attended lectures by Lao legal experts, their knowledge remains weak. Various factors have hindered the progress of this aspect of the training, not least of which has been the busy schedules of both the teachers and the legal experts. A future goal is to place greater emphasis on this aspect of the program.

Design for change: learner-training

In order to deal with change the students, for their part, need to be empowered to take charge of their own development and education.

They must develop key skills that will allow them to become more autonomous in their approach to their studies during their years at the School of Law and after they enter the legal profession. These empowering skills are: (i) critical thinking, (ii) research skills and (iii) the reading habit; let us consider each of these in turn:

(i) The philosophy of education and teaching methodology in Laos are traditional ones, with the teacher being seen as the possessor of knowledge and the students coming to the classroom as blank slates. Two factors have influenced the adoption of this philosophy: the traditional teaching methods used by Buddhist monks in the temples, and the inflexible authoritarianism of the French school system during the dark period of French colonialism. Just as parents raise their children as they were raised, so teachers tend to teach the way they were taught. Whether one approves or not, such is the accepted teaching style in Lao PDR and at the School of Law. However, both as a balance to the traditional methodology and as a possible alternative model for the Law teachers to experience, we in the School of English place a strong emphasis on developing the students' **critical thinking skills**, in particular argumentation and reasoning. Critical thinking skills are developed through case studies written in the English classes by both students and teachers. The following is an example written by a third-year student (*School of Law Briefs* No.3, December 1994):

> Thao Joy is 17 years old. He drove his father's *jumbo* [motorcycle taxi] to take passengers to the Morning Market. When he arrived he deposited the *jumbo* at the parking lot with Mr. Tou. Then Joy went to the morning market. When he returned his *jumbo* was gone! He was angry!
>
> Is the deposit given to Mr. Tou a contract? What kind of contract?

These provocative cases spark discussion, argumentation and debate. In this way, students are developing argumentation and critical thinking skills as well as legal knowledge and English language ability.

(ii) **Research skills** are critical in the legal field. Indeed, the furnishing of a Law Library at the School has been another activity of SIDA. However, students need to learn how to use a library, how to

research a specific law or a specific case. Research skills are developed at the School of Law primarily through the the writing of a paper to compare and contrast legal systems. Just as studying the grammar system of a foreign language can lead to a deeper knowledge of the grammar of one's own language, so the study of a different legal system helps develop an understanding of one's own system. Students need to find material in the library and interview legal experts. Such activities are carried out, of course, in English.

(iii) The English program at the School of Law places a strong emphasis on reading. Reading is not a firmly established habit in Lao PDR. It is rare to see people reading, and there is a dearth of reading material in the Lao language. One goal of our project is to develop the **reading habit** in our students. An English library of close to 1000 graded readers is available to them. A 20-minute period of Sustained Silent Reading, during which all students and teachers read silently, occurs in many of our English classrooms. Additionally, the students write and publish a bi-monthly student newspaper, the *School of Law Briefs*, which provides high-interest reading material. One student has written a 45-page romantic novel in English entitled *The Heart is Washed by Tears*, which includes a scene in a Lao courtroom; this novel will be printed and used as classroom material.

A Lao strategy

The Lao have a unique gift for dealing with difficult situations. Their approach is to keep cool and calm and to let events unfold. The problem may, in fact, simply go away. The Lao say: "*Chay yen duh!*": *Keep a cool heart.*

Foreign experts may be able to help the Lao to develop their critical thinking, research and reading skills but the Lao can teach us an important strategy to cope with change. Keep a cool heart. *Chay yen duh.*

Note

1. The Lao population statistics are based on data provided by an official of the Lao National Department of Statistics. A new census has been completed in 1995 and these figures may change; the official predicts that the average age of the Lao population will be even lower.

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Reconciling stakeholders' perspectives in designing a university ESP programme

Wanpen Tubtimtong

Abstract: *Recently a group of university administrators and employers complained that the standard of English of science and engineering graduates from Chulalongkorn University was lower than in the past, and that the majority of graduates could not communicate effectively in the real world. A research study was commissioned to investigate the situational and pedagogical contexts of language use at the graduate level. Data were collected from 5 deans, 82 subject lecturers and 91 students from the five faculties of scientific and engineering disciplines.*

The findings of the study indicate a disparity between the University's stated aim of increased internationalization and the status of English language training in the individual faculties and departments. They also reveal considerable differences between the various groups of respondents in terms of their perceptions of training needs.

This paper describes the main findings and discusses the relevance of the various stakeholders' perspectives in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programme design.

Background

Recently a group of university administrators and employers complained that the standard of English of science and engineering graduates from Bangkok's prestigious Chulalongkorn University was lower than in the past, and that the majority of graduates could not communicate effectively in the real world. In actual fact, it is a moot point whether the level of graduates' English language (EL) proficiency has declined or whether the expectations and demands of industry have risen. No longer satisfied with the graduates simply being able to read (in order to keep up with technological developments in their field), traditionally the main goal of the teaching and learning of English in Thai universities, administrators and employers are now demanding that the graduates should also be able to speak and write effectively. These interactive and productive

skills are considered critical for career advancement in a rapidly-developing country, and hence have been used as a major determinant of success and failure with regard to the graduates' EL ability.

In order to identify the various stakeholders' changing needs and goals, to determine their influences on course design, and to explore the situational and pedagogical contexts of EL use at the graduate level, a research study was conducted at the University's five faculties of scientific and engineering disciplines, namely: Science, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Dentistry, Preventive and Social Medicine, and Engineering. The deans were interviewed, and then asked to distribute questionnaires to subject lecturers and graduate students in their faculties. The lecturers returned 82 completed questionnaires, and the graduate students 91.

In the following sections the main findings of this study will be reported (for a more detailed description, see Tubtimtong 1994), and the relevance discussed of the various stakeholders' perspectives in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programme design.

The deans' perspectives

The deans considered English to be "very useful" for graduates working in scientific and technological fields. It was deemed "essential" in some departments (for instance in the Departments of Chemical Engineering and Mining Engineering), which were preparing to offer graduate EL programmes to local and international students in the near future.

The Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry believed that his students' EL ability was at a functional level that was adequate both for graduate study and for future professional needs. This view was shared by the Dean of Pharmaceutical Sciences, although the latter added that judgements on such matters should also take into account the different types of employment into which graduates would be going. Employment in the private sector with international pharmaceutical companies, for example, required a higher-than-average degree of linguistic and communicative competence on the part of the workforce; graduates had therefore to improve their EL skills to be better prepared for these demanding positions.

The three other deans rated their students' level of EL proficiency as "adequate" to "poor". They shared the view that the students' language ability should be improved to a level at which they could cope effectively with the requirements of graduate study and of future employment.

Despite the respondents' views on students' EL deficiencies, the Deans of Science and Pharmaceutical Sciences reported that a few departments in their faculties encouraged students to write their dissertations in English. The latter explained that most research studies in his faculty were based on previous work; in other words, they were a continuation and extension of schematic knowledge. Consequently, students could adopt the organizational and presentation techniques and, to a certain extent, linguistic structures and vocabulary from earlier studies. Furthermore, when possible, supervisors would help with language problems. In addition, the faculty placed a good deal of emphasis on the quality of content, and far less on the standard of language and presentation.

When asked to rate the EL skills most needed for graduate study and for future employment, the deans were unanimous in their opinion that the skills most necessary for *academic* purposes were (in descending order of importance): reading(R), writing(W), listening(L) and speaking(S). However, they differed in their assessments of the skills most needed for *occupational* purposes. The Dean of Pharmaceutical Sciences reiterated that account would need to be taken of the different types of future employment. He proposed R/W/L/S for employment in the public sector, but changed his ranking to W/S/R/L for employment in the corporate sector. In common with earlier research studies, the present investigation found that it is difficult to make a generalization regarding the skills most needed for occupational purposes, since the graduates may enter a variety of fields and employment positions, with the EL requirements varying considerably from one to another.

The interviewees all agreed that they would most like their students to improve their writing skills. The Dean of Engineering stressed the importance of report writing which, in his view, was a critical tool for success in both academic studies and future career. He wanted engineering students of both undergraduate and graduate status to practise and improve this skill up to at least a functional level. The interviewer pointed out that the linguistic competence of many students did not reach the level

at which they could express their ideas coherently or communicate information successfully, and that it was difficult for the staff of the Language Institute to teach students with limited EL ability to write reports. The Dean insisted that the faculty did not aim for accuracy: they only wanted the students to have a chance to gain familiarity with and to practise the format, the style and the grammatical and lexical components involved, and to develop adequate writing skills and strategies which could later be built on when the students were already in employment. This view was shared by the four other respondents, though they expressed it less emphatically. In addition to writing skills, the Deans of Science and Pharmaceutical Sciences also wanted their students to improve their oral communication skills - conversing, interviewing, giving oral presentations, and so on.

Although English is accorded a great deal of importance and a relatively high status, it is not used as one of the determining factors in accepting students for postgraduate study. The Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry explained that the graduate students in his faculty were mostly former Chulalongkorn undergraduates. Academically, they were very capable in their own disciplines. The decision whether or not to include English in the entry test was based on the policy of individual departments, some employing it as a contributory factor.

The other deans reported that their faculties stressed the importance of specialist knowledge. If the students, mostly from other universities, were well-qualified in their disciplines, they would be accepted. The faculties did not want a lack of EL ability to be a barrier to the students' chances of continuing their studies. The Dean of the Faculty of Science added that the number of Chulalongkorn graduates who chose to study for a Masters degree was relatively low. The majority took up jobs after graduation or went on to further their studies abroad. The faculty therefore had to admit graduates from other universities and some of these were not competent in English. If the faculty were to set high standards for EL proficiency, they would not have enough qualified candidates. However, in certain departments, such as Food Science, where there are a large number of applicants, English can be used as an influencing factor in the admissions process.

To summarize, all the deans stated that they would like the EL programmes to concentrate more on productive and communicative skills

and to be more relevant to the students' fields of study. The Dean of Science expressed a desire to make EL courses compulsory at the graduate level. However, not one of the deans proposed changing the current policy or the status of English. It was later discovered that these two important issues are decided at the departmental level, and at present most departments seem to give priority to recruiting students for their postgraduate programmes rather than to developing the standard of EL proficiency.

The subject lecturers' perspectives

Regarding the role of English, 27% of the subject teachers thought that a good working knowledge of English was "essential", 54% "very useful" and 19% "useful". These findings highlight the important position that EL holds in various professional fields.

About half of the respondents (51%) reported that the medium of instruction in their classes was both Thai and English. Presumably, the language of instruction is Thai, but this is interspersed with English words - a situation that results from the fact that a great number of technical terms cannot be translated into Thai (or they *can* be translated, but the learners are more familiar with the English equivalents) and so the English terms are "borrowed". Most of the other respondents (46%) reported that the medium of instruction was Thai, while a surprising 3% gave English as the language used.

Two-thirds of the lecturers (67%) indicated that English was necessary for students to pass the courses in their field of specialization. One-third (33%) considered it not essential.

The majority of respondents (80%) believed that an ESP course would be useful for students in their discipline, while the rest (20%) disagreed. Those who supported the idea of an ESP course saw the most critical skills as being (in descending order of importance): reading, writing, listening and speaking. They suggested that students should be assigned a large number of required reading texts and asked to write reports on what they had read. When asked to indicate whether an ESP course should be taught by (a) subject teachers; (b) English teachers; or (c)

both (the ESP teachers working in collaboration with the subject teachers), the responses were: (a) =2%; (b) =38%; (c) =60%.

With regard to the status of ESP courses, two-thirds of the respondents (66%) indicated that the courses should be optional, and an almost equal number (68%) believed that they should be non-credited. The reasons given were that:

(i) a large number of students had previously been trained and were already competent;

(ii) the choice should depend on the students' own interests and needs;

(iii) due to the heavy work-load of their academic studies, the students might not have time for English; and

(iv) the broad approach of ESP courses might be inadequate for the differing needs of students in the various departments.

On the other hand, one-third of the lecturers indicated that the courses *should* be obligatory (34%) and credited (32%). These respondents pointed to the unsatisfactory standard of the students' EL ability, and in particular wanted the weak students to raise their level of competence. A few lecturers claimed that, had the ESP courses been optional and non-credited, the students would not have paid attention to them.

In summary, despite the perceived high status and importance of English with regard to both graduate study and future employment, the majority of subject lecturers would prefer EL courses to be optional. This view was also shared by the deans and by the students themselves (with 56% supporting this position). The deans and the lecturers were of the opinion that, if students took the course, this should be as a result of a decision taken on the basis of the programme's merits and their own needs, and not simply because it was an administrative requirement. They suggested that the Language Institute should undertake more research (such as the present study) to obtain information about the immediate and long-term needs of the students and to formulate policies which best satisfied those needs. One particular comment by a subject specialist sums up the consensus of opinion that EL courses should aim to develop productive and communicative skills:

"The English courses given at high school and undergraduate levels emphasize mostly grammar. The students never actually use English. Regrettably, these courses are not practical and are not relevant to reality. These English courses only prepare students to pass written exams, but do not enable them to use English (read, write, listen and speak) effectively. The programme should encourage more practice of communicative skills and should contain realistic tasks."

The students' perspectives

A large majority of students (88%) considered a knowledge of English necessary for them to succeed on their graduate programmes (as a large number of their required reading texts are in English), and almost the same number (89%) indicated that they needed English for both academic and occupational purposes, that is, as an immediate means for acquiring knowledge and as a future means of becoming a better professional. A minority of respondents (12%), however, disagreed with the proposition that a knowledge of English was necessary for success in their disciplines. These students could, presumably, rely entirely on lectures and textbooks in Thai.

When asked to rate the skills most important for graduate study and for future employment, the students stressed written communication skills - reading and writing - for the former, and oral communication skills - listening and speaking - for the latter.

Most students considered their general level of EL proficiency to be "fair", "acceptable", or "poor", whereas only a minority rated their ability as "good". The skills they most wanted to improve were speaking and listening followed by writing. Reading was considered important, but long years of training at the secondary and tertiary levels, together with a schematic knowledge of the subject matter, enabled them to tackle quite successfully the conceptual and communicative intents of the texts.

With regard to the types of language activities encountered in graduate study and anticipated in prospective employment, the students reported that the EL listening situations most often encountered were listening in lectures and seminars and to audio-visual material, followed by listening to the discussions of fellow-students and to the news. For speaking, the highest-ranking situation was conversational exchange, then

presentations on topics within the students' specialized fields, discussions, and reporting activities and events. The students suggested that the number of listening/speaking activities should be increased and speaking performance improved to a functional level.

In terms of reading activities, they reported that they read journals and textbooks to update their knowledge, and project reports and theses to prepare for their own investigations and research work. A few read newspapers. On the question of writing tasks, the students were in total agreement with the subject lecturers in attaching prime importance to report writing.

When asked to rate the skills and knowledge areas most needed for careers in their chosen field of study, the four top-ranking items were (in descending order of importance): (i) technical writing; (ii) talking with people; (iii) knowledge in the specialist field; and (iv) management skills. It is interesting to compare the students' views with those of the subject lecturers, who proposed the order: (i) knowledge in the specialist field; (ii) technical writing; (iii) speed reading; and (iv) talking with people. The difference between their opinions may be accounted for by the fact that some of the students are planning to work in the private sector, and hence lay greater emphasis on areas such as management skills. It is noteworthy that technical writing is accorded importance by all three groups in this survey.

The students were also asked to offer suggestions for making the English course more effective and more useful to them in their field of study; the question elicited a variety of responses. Some respondents argued that English courses should be compulsory, in order to motivate students to increase their efforts to achieve a higher level of proficiency. Others disagreed - they would prefer to have the option of deciding for themselves whether or not to attend the English courses. This group believed that, if the courses were optional and specially organized for those who were interested, they would be more effective. A large number of students suggested that the Language Institute should offer a greater variety of courses to cater for their diverse needs. Some wanted to improve their written communication skills, while others preferred to develop oral communication skills.

Detailed analysis of the data revealed that individual students differed in their personal aims, which were based on their current level of language proficiency, their language difficulties, and their expectations with regard to the learning of English. For the programme to be successful, these individual needs will also have to be taken into consideration and reconciled with the needs of the class and of the institution as a whole.

Refining University language policy

In light of the information obtained from the above analysis of the various stakeholders' perspectives, three main recommendations have been made:

(i) the refinement of University language policy;
(ii) the restructuring of the overall graduate English programme; and
(iii) the redesign of an existing ESP course.

The three issues will be discussed briefly below, beginning with University language policy.

To reconcile conflicting quantitative and qualitative demands - recruiting sufficient numbers of students to fill the graduate programmes vs achieving a high standard of conceptual and linguistic competence to enable the University to realize its goal of becoming more internationalized - it is proposed that, while linguistic ability may or may not be a decisive factor in the application process, students should, once accepted on to a postgraduate programme, take an EL proficiency test. If their performance on the test met a required standard, students would have the option of attending an English course or not. However, if their performance fell below the accepted standard, they would be *required* to attend an English course. Perceiving the weight and importance thereby attached to English, the students' interest would be stimulated and their attempts to improve their EL ability redoubled; this in turn would contribute to the maintenance of the high standard of academic excellence expected of graduates from Chulalongkorn University.

Restructuring the graduate English programme

Instead of the five courses currently being offered by the Language Institute, a wider variety of courses is being proposed to cater for the changing and more demanding needs of the graduate students. The proposed programme is structured into three levels: Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced. The first level is non-domain-specific, and is for the most part cognitively undemanding. It has the function of acculturation and academic support, with a focus on reading and writing skills. Its main aim is to upgrade the English proficiency of the students to an acceptable (functional) standard. The second level involves ESP courses, designed to suit the differing needs of students in the various faculties. These courses are skills-driven and cognitively demanding; the aim is to develop in students an ability to handle the kind of spoken and written English that they will be encountering within their disciplines. The third level deals with specific skills for advanced learners. The main objective is to develop greater efficiency in communication skills or professional skills, so the courses will focus on areas such as technical report writing or techniques for effective oral presentations.

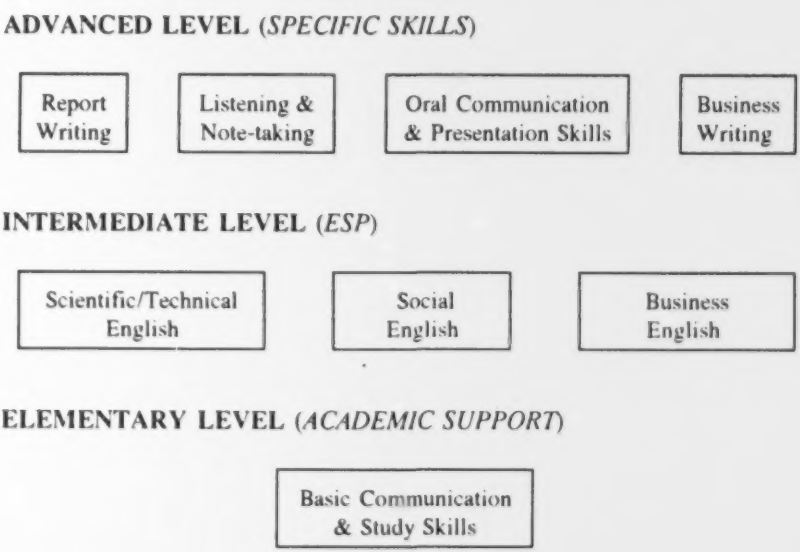

Figure 1: Representation of proposed three-level graduate English programme

On entry to the graduate programme, students will take a proficiency test and will be placed within this framework according to their language ability. Based on past record and experience, it can be expected that two-thirds of the students will be assigned to Elementary classes, and one-third to the Intermediate level. Students who successfully complete each level will be able to move on to a higher level.

Redesigning an existing ESP course

The advantage of a needs analysis, which attempts to obtain information from a range of sources and viewpoints, is that it helps to build up a comprehensive and balanced picture of the situation. The drawback is that there may be disagreement between respondents in their perceived needs and wants, some of which may prove difficult to reconcile or satisfy. In this survey, the deans and the subject specialists placed greatest emphasis on the development of reading and writing skills, the immediate requirements for academic purposes. The students themselves acknowledged the importance of these two skills for their studies, but considered an improvement in their oral communication skills to be their main priority (with writing skills following in second place). The course designer has had, therefore, to balance widely divergent objectives and requirements in constructing the programme.

The raw data have been interpreted, in the light of a theoretical and methodological framework, in order to produce an integrated series of teaching/learning experiences which aim to guide the learners to a particular state of knowledge. Based on the belief that, even though a given language activity may focus on a particular skill or ability, that activity will nevertheless usually require the learner to engage other aspects of his/her communicative competence (Widdowson 1978), an integrated approach was adopted in redesigning the course. In this framework, reading activities provide inputs for writing tasks and opportunities for exploring discourse structure of the text (thereby equipping the learners with the model for both constructing and assessing their own writing); at the same time, they also stimulate and extend the interpretative faculty (which the learners bring to bear when they read) to the writing skill. In this integrated-skills approach, reading and writing, as well as listening and speaking, are viewed as two sides of

a single coin, the exercise of the one involving the exercise of the other in the interactive and negotiative process of communication.

English is used as the medium of instruction in order to provide the learners with linguistic and conceptual inputs to develop their receptive skills and to stimulate a response in the target language. The students are given every opportunity to practise the four skills in a real communicative context, and their performance is assessed in terms of communicative effectiveness rather than grammatical flawlessness or accuracy. The processes of practice and use being promoted on the course serve, according to Strevens (1988: 11), two particular ends:

> they assist the learner to make the leap from receptive to productive learning, and they enable him to gradually improve the accuracy, fluency and quality of his command of English.

Turning to the structure of the course, the first half concentrates on developing reading and writing skills. However, listening and speaking are, from the beginning, integrated into each lesson and subsequently form a major component of the course, preparing students to take part in academic discussions and presentations. In the last unit of the course, the four language skills are combined in task-based activities which relate to topics selected from the students' specialized fields. This represents the culmination of an entire semester's work. The students research and prepare the text (mindful of the audience, their classmates, who come from various departments), deliver the presentation, and respond to questions or requests for further information. The audience take notes during the presentation, discuss interesting or controversial points which might arise, and subsequently offer an assessment of the presenter's performance.

The communicative and interactive exchange at the end of each presentation is a challenging task for all participants due to its unrehearsed nature. Both the presenter and the audience have to draw on and deploy all the EL resources they have at their disposal, which will extend far beyond what they have been taught on this course alone. Although the linguistic level of some of the students may not be a great deal higher than when they first entered the course, they learn to *use* the English they have and demonstrate greater confidence in expressing themselves in the target language.

Conclusion

As the objectives and goals of stakeholders vary with changing socio-economic conditions, needs analysis will continue to play an essential role in providing insights into the context of language learning; in bridging the gap between what is expected and what is offered; in pointing the direction for the revision and upgrading of teaching materials; and, ultimately, in ensuring quality and cost-effectiveness in all teaching programmes. In certain circumstances, it also assists in the refinement of language policy at the institutional level, as is hoped will be the case with the findings of the present research.

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ESP methodology for science lecturers

Angela Rogers and Cukup Mulyana

Abstract: *In an attempt to upgrade the English language reading skills of students in the Faculty of Science at Padjadjaran University in Bandung, Indonesia, science lecturers were assigned the task of designing and teaching short courses to help students work with discipline-specific English-language texts. These courses were to be targetted directly at meeting the learners' study needs. The lecturers appointed to this task needed training in language teaching methodology and course design for English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which was provided by a Language Advisor based at the University.*

Taking the English for Physics course as an example of these ESP programmes, this paper describes briefly the aims of the course; the preparation programme for the lecturers involved; materials selection and design; and feedback from the learners.

In light of the positive outcomes of the pilot course, it is felt that this combination of the expertise of the science lecturer and the language specialist gives science students a solid foundation for future study.

Background

Padjadjaran University is an Indonesian state university in Bandung, West Java. Since most of the required reading on many of its courses is in English, all first-year students at the University take a compulsory English language course for one semester. In 1993, the Faculty of Science proposed that English for Scientific Study should be taught by subject lecturers. The Faculty saw a number of important advantages in such an initiative:

(i) Subject lecturers have successfully studied using English textbooks themselves, and hence know from experience which aspects of the language are most essential for scientists.

(ii) The lecturers and their students are already familiar with each other.

(iii) There is less likelihood of the teacher failing to grasp the content of a text. McDonough (1984) quotes Nolasco on the great faith students have in their subject teachers and their preference for learning the subject and language together; Swales on the desirability of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teacher having a knowledge of the content area; and Abbott on a proposal that scientists should be trained to teach ESP.

The potential drawback to the arrangement was that science lecturers might not feel confident to teach English. A Language Advisor based at the University was therefore called in to train the science lecturers and to help them prepare a series of short ESP courses.

This paper describes briefly some of the processes involved in preparing for, delivering and evaluating the pilot course, taking the English for Physics course as an example.

Identifying the aims of the course

A preliminary meeting with the Language Advisor was attended by one or two lecturers from each of the science departments. It was established from the outset that time was going to be very limited. For the teachers, there was time for one three-hour meeting each week for only 10 weeks before the teaching semester was due to start. The students would have three hours of language training per week for just 13 weeks. Consequently, it was essential to manage time strictly by focusing on the most important needs of both the lecturers and their students.

Previously, science students had been taught General English in the hope that this would help them improve their reading skills and enable them to write abstracts in English. However, because the time available was insufficient to achieve a significant improvement in their level of general proficiency, the students felt the courses were doing little to help them with their studies, and so became frustrated. It seemed to them that there was no connection between (in this case) Physics and English, and that English was not a subject that physicists can enjoy or find easy. Accordingly, in preparing for the new course, the following three aims were identified:

(i) to enable students to read Physics texts rapidly and with good comprehension;

(ii) to enable students to write brief abstracts in English with minimal errors and which could be easily understood; and

(iii) to motivate students to continue to learn English independently, by making them aware of its importance for their careers.

These aims led in turn to the identification of four specific requirements in the re-design of the programme. There was a need to:

(i) design a more appropriate curriculum, based on learners' study aims rather than on grammar and general language skills;

(ii) use materials that dealt with topics relating to Physics, so that the learners could perceive the relevance of the English course to their main studies;

(iii) adopt a more active classroom methodology, in order to motivate learners and to give them as much productive practice as possible in the English classroom; and

(iv) devise some means of evaluating the course, so that it might in the future be adapted further to satisfy students' aims and needs.

Training in language teaching methodology

Lecturers were encouraged on their preparation programme to use English as the medium of instruction for at least part of the class, and for classroom language were referred to Willis (1981) and Doff (1988). Other books available to the teachers on a self-access basis included dictionaries (monolingual, bilingual and scientific), grammar reference works, and textbooks on reading for scientific purposes, such as Cooper (1979), Morrow (1980) and Baudoin *et al* (1988).

The lecturers discussed the use of pairwork and groupwork to maximize the level of individual student participation. Discussion in English of

the content of scientific texts was proposed as an alternative to translation. This was intended to break down the barrier between the content of a text and the language used to convey it, thus promoting language acquisition through the activation of existing schemata (see Widdowson 1984). New words and expressions were to be associated with familiar concepts, and would therefore be easier to recall. Furthermore, students are most likely to have something to communicate within their own field of specialization, and this is a strong motivating factor.

During this preparation period, the lecturers were encouraged to discuss the advantages and drawbacks of various approaches and techniques and to reach their own conclusions. This was vital, as it was not possible on such a short training programme to give a thorough grounding in language teaching methodology; trainees had therefore to be in a position to continue to train themselves afterwards. The same need, of course, applied to the students on the ESP courses; for them, too, independent decision-making and autonomous learning were essential. In this respect, then, the lecturers were in a similar position to that of their students - an instance of Woodward's (1991) concept of "loop input", or "popping down" into the shoes of the learners.

Materials selection and design

A selection of ESP course books was available, but most of the texts used were taken from books relating to the students' discipline. There were three advantages to this:

(i) Students were motivated and encouraged by the familiarity and relevance of the materials.

(ii) Course content was useful and relevant for learning both language and subject, helping to break down the barrier between the two.

(iii) Students could be asked to bring their science textbooks to use in the English class, and questions and exercises based on the text could be written on the board. This again blurred the demarcation line between subject and language study and enhanced the perceived relevance of the English classes, and was also - a not insignificant consideration - economical.

Each week, about half of the lecturers' training session was devoted to materials development and course design. They worked alone or in pairs, and discussed their work with each other and with the Language Advisor. It was their responsibility to ensure the relevance of texts to their students' needs, as well as decide the most appropriate sequence in which to use them. Some grammatical aspects of English which were identified as common sources of confusion in scientific texts were: mass and count nouns; the Passive Voice; the Present Perfect Tense; and the use of articles.

The University authorities required mid-course and end-of-course tests to be conducted. These tests were based on texts taken from the students' subject areas, with tasks devised to check overall comprehension and identification of main ideas. Various question formats were discussed, bearing in mind the need to reflect students' real-life study needs. Popular formats involved drawing, correcting or completing a diagram based on information in the text, and open-ended pre-reading comprehension questions.

Some basic practice in writing abstracts was included in all the ESP courses. Sample abstracts were studied and criticized; good organization and clarity of meaning were considered to be the most important elements of "good" writing.

Piloting the course

Throughout the delivery of the pilot ESP course, observations took place and consultations were available with the Language Advisor. Some of the main topics of discussion related to questions of classroom management.

For example, pairwork and groupwork were not easy to organize in the large classes the lecturers were teaching. In one instance, 200 students were seated in a room with poor acoustics and a board visible to less than half of the class. In this extreme case, students were organized into study groups of seven people who lived close to each other. Each group chose a monitor who was responsible for liaising between the group members and the lecturer, noting down queries, organizing photocopying, collecting handouts for absentees, and so on. It is hoped

that the cooperation begun here will continue among the students in future. This system helped the lecturers identify students who had problems with English so that they could give them assistance and advice. Students could re-group on the basis of ability or for other reasons by agreement with the lecturer.

Lack of equipment and funds led to the use of wallposters for questions and answer keys, shared materials within groups, and frequent use of subject-based textbooks.

Student feedback

The new course initially met, as expected, with some resistance on the part of the learners, who could not see the reasons for the changes or the rationale behind a more active classroom methodology. This prompted discussions which helped raise the learners' awareness of their study needs and the ways in which these were related to the new course. They then understood that the classroom activities would help them to learn how to continue studying independently. Feedback at the end of the course was very positive: evaluation data collected so far is summarized below.

Before the ESP course began, 40 students were asked to fill in a questionnaire covering six aspects of language study. At the end of the course, the same questionnaire was administered again, and any differences in responses were discussed in class.

Question 1 asked students to rank language skills in order of importance to them. Before the course, grammar was seen as the highest priority, closely followed by translation and vocabulary acquisition. Reading ranked sixth out of seven skills listed. By way of contrast, after the course, reading was accorded the highest priority, still closely followed by translation. Vocabulary was fourth, with grammar lowest-ranked. Students had realized that they could grasp the meaning of texts without a detailed knowledge of the grammar; however, they still did not feel confident of their understanding of main ideas if these were not translated into Indonesian.

Question 2 asked how many hours of English students felt they needed. Prior to the course, 2 hours per week was considered sufficient. Following the course, however, this rose to 3-4 hours per week. A similar result was found in response to Question 3, which asked how many hours should be spent learning English outside the classroom. Before the course, students answered from 0 to 2 hours per week only; but in their evaluations they recommended an average of 7 hours' extra study per week, either alone, with friends or on another English course. Clearly, they had recognized how English could help them succeed in their studies.

Questions 4 and 5 concerned the usefulness of classroom activities and methods of checking answers. Pre-course, it was felt that students should take notes while listening to lectures; pairwork and group discussion were totally rejected. The preferred method for checking answers was for the lecturer to write the answers on the blackboard. Post-course, pairwork and group discussion in English and Indonesian were given top priority, and the preference was for the lecturer to move from group to group to monitor discussion. The active classroom methodology was a great success; students found it enjoyable and a useful way of learning both English and Physics.

Finally, Question 6 asked what materials should be used in the ESP classes. Before the course, students proposed grammar exercises, vocabulary lists and Physics texts. After the course, discussion of texts about Physics was by far the most popular choice. Students added writing exercises to their list, and only a few still wanted to memorize lists of vocabulary.

The feedback indicates that active participation in class is both useful and enjoyable. Physics and English can be learnt simultaneously, and a mixture of English and the native language can be used. Since most texts are in English, this tends to replace the native language as study of the subject progresses. Students realized their need to continue learning outside the classroom; they were able to choose the methods they found most suitable and contact either the subject lecturer or a language specialist whenever they needed extra help.

Conclusion

The participatory style of the English classes has been carried over into the Physics lectures, and the students have begun to cooperate more outside the classroom in both areas. Some Physics classes are now given partly in English, and the demarcation line between the two subjects is gradually being effaced. Language specialists are consulted in cases of uncertainty, and give classes in writing, speaking and other areas as the need arises; but scientific reading is now the responsibility of the science lecturers.

Our recommendation is that science lecturers break down the barrier between their subject and its expression in English, by incorporating scientific reading in English into their science curriculum. Science students should be encouraged to be active, cooperative and autonomous learners, so that they can continue to develop their knowledge and skills in *all* relevant subjects after they leave university.

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Language teacher education by distance mode: a pilot programme in Thailand

Rachanee Senisrisant

Abstract: *The language skills and teaching methodology of foreign language teachers in Thailand need continual upgrading. However, due to limitations of time, finances and availability of trainers, teachers from remote areas of the country have lacked access to professional development opportunities. In response to this problem, a distance training programme for secondary school teachers of English was piloted in 1993-1994. The aim of the pilot was to define an effective, inexpensive model which could be used throughout the country and which would especially benefit those teachers who have not been able to take advantage of conventional in-service programmes.*

This paper examines the pilot programme and adjudges it a success. It identifies the determining factors that have contributed to this success; indicates some of the drawbacks encountered; and concludes with an assessment of the likelihood of sustainability of such a model.

Introduction

The use of English as the language of international communication, together with the shift of language teaching paradigm from audio-lingual methodology to communicative approach, have had a great impact on teachers' ideology. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers now feel a pressing need to be competent in using the language, and hence they are continually making requests for in-service programmes to upgrade their language skills and teaching methodology.

In Thailand, in-service courses for teachers are offered by higher education institutions at Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Masters levels. Shorter training courses are also available through Ministry of Education institutions, sometimes in collaboration with overseas agencies such as the British Council or the United States Information Service

(USIS). However, due to constraints of time, finance and availability of training personnel, such courses are not normally accessible to teachers in rural areas. Face-to-face programmes are usually conducted in Bangkok and other big cities, and can therefore be unaffordable in terms of both time and money for teachers from remote areas where schools cannot release teachers from their duties without imposing a burden on colleagues. (Hiring short-term substitute teachers or providing a pool system of substitution is not normal practice in schools.)

Teacher education by distance mode: a pilot programme

However, the Ministry of Education is currently exploring ways to improve the quality of English teaching throughout the country by providing equal access for all teachers to professional development opportunities. As part of this endeavour, a teacher education programme in distance mode was piloted in 1993-1994. This was a collaborative effort between Thailand, Singapore and Canada, aimed at developing the knowledge and skills of EFL teachers through mainly print-based distance learning materials. The pilot course was designed to investigate the assumption that this mode of delivery is the most economical and the most accessible for teachers from throughout the country.

The project was funded principally by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Secretariat (SEAMES). There was also some initial financial contribution from the Department of Teacher Education (DTE) of the Thai Ministry of Education during the planning phase, when project funds had not yet been made available.

The York University English Language Institute of Toronto, Canada collaborated with the Singapore-based Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Language Centre (SEAMEO RELC) on the design of the programme, provision of material writers and transfer of distance education knowledge and skills to the Thai working team. The Thai DTE worked with RELC in setting up a delivery system, conducting the pilot programme and evaluating the learners. The DTE also collaborated with the Department of General Education in the selection of personnel to work as tutors on the project. Finally, teacher training colleges worked with Regional Secondary Supervisory Units on selecting trainees and conducting the programme.

The objectives of the programme (stated on page 5 of the Tutor Training Manual) were:

> ...to provide participants with practical skills in TEFL [Teaching English as a Foreign Language] combined with theoretical knowledge in the area, and to provide them with an opportunity to further develop their English language skills.

The target group comprised 45 Thai secondary-level EFL teachers from two areas of the country - 20 teachers from Chiang Mai in the North, and 25 from Nakhon Ratchasima in the Northeast. The teachers from Chiang Mai were working at six different local schools and the teachers from Nakhon Ratchasima at 14 different schools.

Implementation of the pilot programme was begun in May 1993, with orientation workshops being conducted at both field centres by the project team from Thailand, Singapore and Canada. Prior to the workshops, much work had been done in terms of needs analysis, materials writing, pre-testing and field testing of the materials, and a tutor-training workshop had been run in Singapore. The project team from Singapore and Canada had visited the field centres and met with the trainees several times to ensure that the materials they were designing were appropriate to the teachers' needs. After the orientation workshops, the materials were dispatched in six modules over a period of 11 months between May 1993 and March 1994. Built into the module units were seventeen assignments that had to be completed during that time-frame. A tutor support system was provided.

A mid-course workshop was conducted at each centre in October/November 1993 to monitor the progress of individual trainees. A final evaluated task, in the form of an oral presentation, was assigned at an end-of-course workshop from 21-27 April 1994. Of the 45 trainees on the programme, 36 successfully completed the course requirements - a pass rate of 80%.

Achievements

Three principal achievements may be claimed for the pilot project. Firstly, at 80%, the participants' **success rate** was high. There were only three drop-outs at the Chiang Mai centre and six at Nakhon Ratchasima. Some

of these withdrew on account of a heavy teaching load or other commitments. Others did not acquire adequate language proficiency to be able to keep pace with the assignments.

Secondly, there was a significant improvement in trainees' **teaching skills and knowledge**, as recorded in the Evaluation Report (Epstein 1994):

> The benefits of this program have been positive and far-reaching, contributing not only to the skills of participants, but also often to their colleagues'...Other spin-offs such as greater awareness on the part of participants of instructional design in their lesson planning, and distance education as an option for themselves and their students, are important. The benefits of improved EFL classes and more motivated EFL students will ultimately result in better English speakers in Thailand.

Thirdly, it was noted that the participants' **English language proficiency** had improved. The course modules required trainees to read the materials provided and relate them to classroom practice. The assignments, which were marked by tutors, allowed the tutors not only to evaluate the participants' grasp of the concepts in the unit but also to assess their increasing level of English language proficiency. In addition, dialogue journals were used as a means of communication between tutors and trainees. It was made clear that the journal was simply a record of participants' thoughts and reactions, and grades were assigned solely on the basis of effort.

English language was used on the programme as a means to an end, namely an improvement in the standard of EFL teaching. However, due to the nature of the tasks set, trainees had to use the language constantly. As in most distance learning programmes, reading and writing were the skills principally practised. The pre- and post-course criterion-referenced written English language proficiency tests indicated that the majority of participants had developed in terms of language ability over the 12 months of the programme. At Chiang Mai 55% of the trainees passed the pre-test and 100% the post-test, while at Nakhon Ratchasima the figures were 24% and 63% respectively. It is interesting to note that tutors also felt that their own language skills had improved through the necessity of responding to assignments in English.

Factors contributing to the success of the pilot programme

These successes were achieved in spite of very limited resources and funding. They may be attributed to four main factors: materials, delivery systems, tutors, and trainees. Let us consider each of these factors in turn.

Materials for the distance learners had to be attractive and accessible. The appearance and the design of all the manuals was consistent, and the level of language not too far above the trainees' level of proficiency (*cf.* Krashen's $i+1$ in Krashen 1985). The materials provided a good balance between background theoretical issues and their application to classroom practice. The content focused on current issues relevant to the participants' teaching needs, covering topics such as: the integration of skills, the nature of communicative competence, teaching language in context, and theme-based teaching. Tutor-marked assignments allowed trainees to reflect on what they had read and tried out in the classroom.

Careful attention was also paid to the provision of appropriate **delivery systems**. Before the start of the programme, there was a three-day orientation workshop to familiarize trainees with the materials and methodology of the course. Materials were then sent out at regular intervals for participants to study. Assignments had to be completed within two weeks and mailed back to the tutors for marking. The marked assignments were later returned with comments and suggestions for trainees to improve their knowledge and skills. Allowance was made for telephone consultations to be used as one component of tutorials and monitoring. A three-day mid-course workshop was conducted to monitor progress and assist those who were having problems keeping up with their assignments; and at an end-of-course workshop an evaluation was made of trainees' professional development on completion of the programme.

In the pilot phase, both tutors and trainees were instructed to observe a set schedule. Those living far away from their field centre found that regular mail could not reach the centre within three days; the express mail service was used to solve this problem. Though telephone tutorials were highly recommended, trainees did not consult their tutors by telephone as much as had been expected, because of problems with the local communications infrastructure: telephones are not available in all

the areas where teachers were based. To compensate for this, the fast turn-around time for tutor-marked assignments played an important part in the communication process.

The **tutors** were selected on the basis of their professional background, their language proficiency, and above all their level of commitment to the project. It was fortunate that in the pilot programme all the personnel involved, especially the tutors, were very dedicated even though they had no release time to work on this project. Each tutor was responsible for overseeing the work of 10 trainees, in addition to their regular teaching load. As the budget was very limited, payments made to tutors were small - just US$ 60 per trainee for the duration of the one-year programme. Moreover, there were no funds available from the project for management personnel such as the Project Coordinator or the Country Coordinator. In short, if it had not been for the dedication and personal interest of the tutors and the entire project team, the project could not have succeeded.

For the majority of **trainees**, learning by distance mode proved to be effective. However, the selection process favoured some groups of candidates over others. Due to such limitations as a lack of experience with distance education, the selection time-frame, and the bureaucratic difficulty of working across departmental boundaries, the selection of trainees was not evenly distributed and not carefully controlled with regard to number, language proficiency, background knowledge and distance from the field centre. The one common feature that the trainees shared was that they were all EFL teachers with at least two years' experience. The number of participants per school varied from one to seven. The distance of schools from the field centre ranged from only eight kilometres to 200 kilometres. Teachers in these more remote locations had no easy access to a tutor and retained a full teaching load; some even had 24-hour responsiblity for a dormitory of young boys.

Despite the inadequacy of the selection procedure, the project was successful on account of the trainees' enthusiasm for learning new ideas and their resolution to see the course through to its end. Joint certification between the Thai and overseas institutions appears also to have had a positive effect on motivation.

Among the most important trainee factors influencing the success rate are: the level of participants' language proficiency; the location of schools with respect to the field centre; the availability of time to follow the course; the number of trainees per participating school; accessibility of tutors; availability of peer tutorials; teaching load; and the degree of administrative support. It is highly recommended that the selection of trainees for distance education programmes take these issues into account. Wherever possible, there should be at least two trainees from each participating school, and the participants should receive orientation on how to form positive working relationships with their colleagues.

Sustainability

The project outcomes were very positive. All parties involved were highly dedicated and worked beyond what might reasonably have been expected of them. Despite the limitations outlined above, the pilot programme may be seen as a success. With the experience that has now been gained in distance education by the working team, together with their dedication and the quality of the revised materials, the project will certainly be sustainable - given administrative support from the upper echelons in terms of release time for the team, careful selection of new tutors and trainees, adequate funding, and recognition of the certification as counting towards a higher qualification such as a Graduate Diploma or Masters degree.

A multi-national project of this kind requires very careful planning on the part of all concerned. To ensure the sustainability of this programme, two conditions need to be observed. In the first place, it is necessary to continue to assign to an administrator from the host country's Ministry of Education a major role in the recruitment and supervision of field staff. Secondly, the tutors from the pilot project should be re-appointed as tutors or as tutor-trainers on future courses.

Conclusion

The pilot TEFL distance education programme received a positive reaction from all parties involved. All of the objectives were achieved: the professional skills and language proficiency of the English teachers who

participated in the programme were improved; and an equal development opportunity was made available for teachers from remote areas of the country. The project brought together people from different institutions and countries and created bonds of friendship, love and trust between institutions and among the people of different nations. The benefits of the programme far outweigh the difficulties encountered during the pilot phase.

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Study mode negotiation

Mani Le Vasan and Rajeswary Sargunan

Abstract: *Increased demand for English language training (ELT) services in the information age has led to the development of an ELT industry. This has in turn required the language teaching/research community to make greater efforts to view the services it provides from the perspective of its clientele.*

One of the features of this new relationship is the emphasis given to the role of negotiation between clients and ELT providers in determining the learning encounter. This paper outlines a model of study mode negotiation that has been developed at the University of Malaya, in the specific context of the provision of training in English writing skills to corporate clients.

Introduction

The recent use of the term *language training industry* signals a paradigm shift that has significant implications for both providers and users of language services worldwide, particularly in those countries where mastery of a second language is viewed as crucial to self-development or as a "ticket" to employment.

The Malaysian people's goal of attaining the status of a fully-developed nation by the year 2020, of being a producer as well as a consumer of advanced technologies, is highly dependent on the nation's ability to communicate effectively in the international arena (Mahathir 1991). All sectors of the Malaysian economy, and in particular the industrial sectors, are therefore taking steps to ensure they have this capability and, since English is *the* language of science and technology, the consequence has been a high demand for English language training (ELT) services.

The providers of these services are still reeling from the impact of this demand, as the English language has suddenly been catapulted back into favour, its status in Malaysia having shifted from that of a relatively unimportant second language to its present position as the chosen medium

of communication on the information highway and throughout the global business community. This change of status is confirmed elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region by Estad & Ferryman (1991), Goh & Chan (1993), and Le Vasan (1994).

The scene is thus set for the providers of ELT services to follow the goals set by industry in "optimizing" the current demand for their services. The first step has been to examine and adapt to the "alien" culture of the industries in which the providers now have to function. Such a move has forced the language teaching/ research community to reconsider its aims and its perspectives, and to bring these more into line with those of its clients. This has in turn brought about the paradigm shift that has positioned at centre stage the goals and value systems of the business community, requiring the more academically-inclined language teaching/research community to work within this newly-defined territory (Tickoo 1994; Sargunan & Chelliah-Tam 1994).

One of the features of this new working relationship is the emphasis given to the role of **negotiation** between clients and ELT providers in determining the learning encounter. Negotiation is used to reach decisions concerning the goals and methodology of learning, in order to ensure cooperation and consequently to enhance satisfaction. This paper outlines our model of study mode negotiation, based on experience gained in providing training in English writing skills to corporate clients, as part of a writing skills team of the Language Centre of the University of Malaya.

Theoretical underpinnings

Our methodology is built on the understanding that the business sector consists of highly-specialized communities that possess all the characteristics of a discourse community as identified by Swales (1990). These communities have:

(i) common goals;
(ii) participatory mechanisms which are actively used to provide information and feedback;
(iii) community-specific genres;
(iv) a highly-specialized terminology; and
(v) a high level of expertise.

Since this theory of discourse is based on the premise that members of the community should be familiar with particular genres used in the communicative furtherance of goals, the present study has also made use of the concept of *genre*, defined by Swales (1981: 10*f*) as:

> a more or less standardized communicative event with a goal or set of goals mutually understood by the participants in that event and occurring within a functional rather than a personal or social setting.

Another major line of thought that has influenced our research is the "ecological approach to ESP" propounded by Holliday and Cooke (1983). According to this approach (*art.cit.*: 124), ESP (English for Specific Purposes) can only "take root, grow, bear fruit and propagate in the local soil". In order to investigate thoroughly the nature of this local soil, we chose to adopt an ethnographic approach to our research issue, since such an approach is ideally suited to a situation in which the ESP practitioner is compelled to encounter and make sense of a strange new world that abides by an alien culture (Agar 1986).

These theories form the backdrop against which the work reported in this paper has been carried out. Our interview schedules and the Study Mode Analysis Record Form (see below) were devised with the aim in mind of developing an effective strategy for building the foundation of a viable ESP course (in this case, for the teaching of professional writing). All the questions and decisions in our research have been guided by the objective of creating a customized language service that provides total client satisfaction. In line with standard business practice we have also taken into account the value placed on time, and have thus adopted the KISS (*Keep it simple, stupid!*) principle in framing our interview schedule.

This paper attempts to demonstrate the relationship between the initial interview, discussion and final decision on which the training contract depends, and the significance of this relationship for the creation of a successful ESP course. It is in these areas that ESP consultant/ practitioners need most help in order to ensure that the service they are providing is truly professional: this will in turn ensure that they are accorded appropriate status by the client. A poor relationship between client and provider, and the absence of a proper contract between them, have often proved to be the major stumbling-blocks in ESP programmes (Roe 1994; Sargunan 1995).

Study mode negotiation

Study mode negotiation is carried out in three phases:

(i) Interview with the learner
(ii) Interview with the learner's employer
(iii) Analysis of the interviews, followed by the formulation of decisions and recommendations that are subsequently renegotiated before the service commences

At first glance this may seem like a conventional needs analysis, but a closer inspection will reveal that it investigates issues that are more closely related not only to the needs of the learner but also to those of the end-user of the learner's services. Moreover, our approach advocates the use of *authentic* - as opposed to merely original - texts. An *authentic text* is here defined as a text that is current, and that has an identifiable social purpose; namely, it is used by the learners in the process of carrying out their job functions.

Our methodology, briefly put, comprises the following components:

(i) Initial **interview** with the learner and employer to obtain relevant personal, educational and professional particulars
(ii) **Diagnosis** of learning difficulties
(iii) **Prognosis**: deciding the best method to overcome these difficulties
(iv) **Negotiation** of study mode in the light of both diagnosis and prognosis
(v) **Preparation** of course content and decisions on appropriate methodology
(vi) **Treatment**: implementing the service based on agreed procedures and commitments
(vii) **Evaluation**: analyzing the written product to provide feedback and to determine the degree of success of the service

Rationale behind interview schedule for learners

The interview schedule for learners is presented in Appendix A. The following table summarizes the rationale behind the categories of questions asked in the interview:

CATEGORY OF QUESTIONS	RATIONALE
1. Personal data	Places learner in the context of the learning situation
2. Discourse community	Information gathered from responses to these questions provides insights into: • the actual working environment of the sub-community, which may vary slightly from the mother community • the specialized setting in which the employee operates • the immediate communicative needs - this will allow for customized teaching • the genres that need to be taught in relation to job function and documents
3. Writing needs and difficulties	Information enables consultant to: • diagnose learner's problems • negotiate course goals/ objectives • ensure that objectives of learner are met
4. Level of commitment	Information important in: • negotiating with the employer regarding target attainment level, length of course, work release, schedule (whether during office hours or outside), etc. • reaching decisions concerning the methodology to be adopted

Table 1: Summary of rationale behind interview schedule for learners

Rationale behind interview schedule for the employer

The interview schedule for the employer is presented in Appendix B. The following table summarizes the rationale behind the question topics that form the basis of the interview:

QUESTION TOPICS	RATIONALE
1. **Reasons for employee undergoing training**	Determination of employer's perspective on course goals and objectives
2. **Employee's role in company/department**	Comparison of employer's perspective of employee's job function with learner's perspective in order to establish that there is not a mismatch
3. **Expectations in terms of production of documents**	Identification of genres that need to be taught from employer's viewpoint
4. **Employee's writing difficulties as perceived by the employer**	Diagnosis of learner's writing problems as perceived by employer and/or reader(s) of documents
5. **Target achievements**	Need to be determined for purposes of course design. Basis for negotiation
6. **Employer's level of commitment and constraints with regard to time and involvement**	Enables consultant to negotiate: • performance levels • number of document types that can be taught/learnt • joint responsibility in evaluation of performance at end of course • fees • course extensions if needed/ desired

Table 2: Summary of rationale behind interview schedule for employer

Rationale behind the Study Mode Analysis Record Form

The Study Mode Analysis Record Form (SMARF) is reproduced in Appendix C. The following table summarizes the rationale behind the data recorded on the SMARF:

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	RATIONALE
Personal data	Name, designation, department of learner	Personalization and customization of service
Learner objectives	Conflation of perceptions of learner, employer and consultant	Allows achievable learning goals and outcomes to be set. Engages interest and motivation of learner
Learner difficulties	Conflation of perceptions of learner, employer and consultant	Enables development of effective learning strategies
Level of ability: mastered/needs to master	Pre- and post-treatment analysis	Enables learner and employer to evaluate effectiveness of service. Provides data for Action Research
Course content	Content determined according to learner objectives, learner difficulties, and time available. Teaching outcomes prioritized based on negotiation	Record of course content for future reference allows continuity in the event of future programs
Recommend-ations	Suggestions made to learner and employer by consultant to chart future directions for training	Provides value-added service in terms of professional advice based on expert opinion. Paves ground for future negotiations and possible continuation of partnership

Resource materials	Authentic materials used in teaching the course for record purposes and for future reference	Constitutes a resource for ESP research and practice. Crucial to our methodology
Filing information	Administrative data held on hard copy or on-line	Maximum accessibility of information for future reference
Miscellaneous	Other relevant information	Provides record of unanticipated contingencies that may have relevance to negotiations and/or to the teaching of the course

Table 3: Summary of rationale behind data recorded on the Study Mode Analysis Record Form

Conclusion

As mentioned above, one of the first steps to be taken in order to function effectively in the new working relationship is for ELT providers to adopt and adapt to the culture of the clients. The business sector, which constitutes a significant proportion of our clientele, holds TCS (Total Customer Service) and TQM (Total Quality Management) as its watchwords; if we, too, are to incorporate these concepts into our new teaching/research paradigm, then negotiation between client and provider is essential. Indeed, the day may come in the not-too-distant future where we may have to obtain ISO 9000 certification (or its equivalent) for our services in order to function in a competitive market economy!

This paper has shown that it is possible to negotiate an effective understanding between client and provider with regard to the provision of language services, and that such an understanding has proved to be a strong foundation on which to construct an ESP programme. We believe that this research will be of interest to our colleagues, as it will pave the way for much-needed further research in the fields of ethnography and genre studies.

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Appendix A: Interview schedule for learners

1. *Personal data*

Name
Institution
Department
Designation
Education/professional qualifications
Working experience

2. *Discourse community*

2.1. What is the nature of your company's business?

2.2. What is your department concerned with?

2.3. What is your role in the company/department?

2.4. What kinds of documents do you produce as part of your job function?

2.5. What is the purpose of these documents?

2.6. Who are the readers of these documents - direct and indirect?

2.7. Does your company/department have an in-house style sheet?

2.8. Do you follow this or are you free to customize?

3. *Writing needs and difficulties*

3.1. Please provide samples of:

(i) your preferred in-house style; and

(ii) samples of your own writing that you have produced as part of your job (both good and bad).

3.2. What are the difficulties that you face when creating the work-related documents that you have mentioned?

3.3. In terms of general English language proficiency, where would you place yourself on a 4-point scale, where 4 represents the highest level of proficiency?

1		2		3		4	

3.4. With regard to the documents you want to write, where would you place yourself on this same scale?

1		2		3		4	

3.5. What do you hope to have attained by the end of this course in terms of:

(i) documents produced;

(ii) general level of language proficiency in relation to the documents; and

(iii) resources that you need?

4. *Level of commitment*

4.1. How many hours are you prepared to spend on this course and when?

4.2. Are you also prepared to put in effort during non-contact hours if necessary?

Appendix B: Interview schedule for the employer

1. Why do you want this employee to attend an English writing skills course?

2. What is the employee's role in the organization/department?

3. What exactly would you like the employee to have learnt by the end of this course?

4. Please list the documents you would like the employee to be able to produce.

5. What documents is the employee currently expected to produce?

6. What do you feel are the employee's weaknesses in producing these documents?

7. In terms of general English language proficiency, where would you place the employee on a 4-point scale, where 4 represents the highest level of proficiency?

1		2		3		4	

8. With regard to writing the documents you want the employee to produce, where would you place him/her on this same scale?

1		2		3		4	

9. For the purposes of learning to produce these documents, how much time are you prepared to spare the employee from work duties?

10. Would you or your representative please be available, for evaluation purposes, to participate with the language training consultant in the assessment of the learner's level of attainment.

11. After we have assessed the employee's level of proficiency we will inform you of the number of hours we need to help him/her with the required skills. At the end of the agreed time we may need to re-negotiate the hours to match your goal or expectation of performance.

12. Cost of language training consultancy and service:

Appendix C: Study Mode Analysis Record Form

File Number:	
Genre:	
Institution:	
Date:	

Personal data

Name:
Designation:
Department:

Learner objectives

According to learner:
According to employer:
According to consultant:

Learner difficulties

According to learner:
According to employer:
According to consultant:

Level of ability: mastered/needs to master:

Proposed course content:

Facilitator(s):

Recommendations:

Resource materials:

Tuition cost per hour:

Miscellaneous:

Quality communication in hospitality: language skills or culture transfer?

Peggy Leung and Terence Lo

Abstract: *The argument of this paper is based on the premise that the goal of language training for the hospitality industry is quality communication in the service encounter. It examines the changing nature of language at work in the service industries, and the language of service in the world of hospitality, and highlights the need for communication convergence in the service encounter as a means of achieving client satisfaction. The pedagogical implication is a need to incorporate a substantial cross-cultural communication component into the hospitality language curriculum. The paper concludes with a call for language learning to be construed essentially as a linguistic experience of culture transfer.*

Introduction

Teachers are familiar with the idea that education is to do with thinking, and training is to do with work; and very naturally, most see themselves as educators rather than trainers. However, teachers of English for specific professional purposes must be both: they need to educate learners to think about the ever-changing English language in communicative interactions in general; but they must also train their students to use the language in specific work settings. In this paper, we explore the use of *cultural* concepts as an approach to English language training in the specific professional sphere of hospitality work, and consider how, through such explorations in the English language classroom itself, we might transfer to our students a certain degree of cultural awareness relevant to the use of English in professional communication.

The focus of this paper is on English language teaching for the hospitality industry in Hong Kong. It first presents a brief statement on the concept of "transfer", and examines the relevance of this concept to teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for the world of work. Secondly, it explains the changes that may be observed in the nature of language in the world of work in a service-oriented economy in general, and in

the world of the hospitality industry in particular. It concludes with a tentative recommendation for a "culture transfer" perspective to EFL programmes for students going into hospitality work.

Training for transfer

First, a brief statement on the concept of "transfer". A relevant observation here is that, for the majority of workers in the hospitality industry in Hong Kong, English is a *foreign* language rather than a *second* language. In other words, they tend to speak English at work only to people who do not speak the local Cantonese. EFL teachers preparing hospitality students for the world of work will therefore have three main concerns. They will have to ensure that:

(i) the learners are given adequate classroom training in English as a foreign language;
(ii) the training is geared directly towards foreign language communicative interaction in hospitality service; and
(iii) the learners are able to transfer what they have learnt in the classroom to the workplace in order to enhance the quality of the hospitality service.

In an ideal situation, therefore, the students will be given classroom training in EFL, and will subsequently be able to transfer what they have learnt to the world of the hospitality industry. But the real world is rarely ideal. In many cases training and performance do not match because the classroom environment is vastly different from the real world of work. The classroom EFL training may simply be irrelevant to the world of work, even though it may be relevant to assessment criteria that are appropriate in the classroom environment. In other cases, EFL learners may fail to transfer what they have learnt successfully in the classroom to the workplace because their language experience is too firmly grounded in the classroom environment. In either situation, the classroom training proves inadequate.

In order to train students to transfer classroom learning effectively to the real world of work, EFL teachers need to get to know enough about the world of work that the students are training for. In these rapidly-changing times, this requires more than the familiar needs analysis and

materials design. We are proposing that, in today's world, we need to examine the changing nature of communication at work in a service-oriented culture in general, and in this specific case, communication in the hospitality industry.

Changing nature of communication at work in a service culture

It appears that the up-market sectors of the hospitality industry, and indeed the up-market sectors of the service industry in Hong Kong as a whole, are looking for professional workers with certain distinct characteristics. In general, these service workers are required to demonstrate four **professional qualities**; they are expected to:

(i) project a knowledgeable image;
(ii) be able to make (often on-the-spot) decisions as to the best way to take advantage of existing resources;
(iii) take personal pride in being sensitive to other people's needs, and in contributing to other people's personal satisfaction; and
(iv) work comfortably in a flexible system of cooperation with colleagues.

Professional service workers handling front-line encounters with clients are also ideally able to communicate to the client, in the often extremely brief service encounter, a number of **personal qualities**; they will demonstrate that they are:

(i) **functionally flexible**, in that they are able to take the initiative in suggesting different ways to get things done to suit different situations, rather than being constrained by standard procedures;

(ii) **institutionally and/or inter-departmentally mobile**, not only with regard to physical mobility, but also in terms of the intellectual ability to think inter-institutionally and inter-departmentally. They will give the impression that they are able to make good use of the experience accumulated and transferred from elsewhere, rather than being restricted to their immediate work environment;

(iii) possessed of a strong sense of **personal autonomy**, shown in the ability to take initiatives to open up communication channels, to make decisions on-the-spot, and to explain reasons for the decisions made; and seen also in a willingness to accept responsibility for taking suitable remedial action, rather than relying on the bureaucratic practice of decision avoidance to protect oneself; and

(iv) **politically sovereign**, in the sense of having the capacity for genuine personal opinion and the ability to evaluate critically the available alternatives in their own everyday life, rather than having merely to role-play established scripts of social interaction.

The language of service in the world of hospitality

Our observation in Hong Kong is that top hotel managers tend to associate these qualities with the concept of *empowerment*. Managers of top hotels have repeatedly stated that they aim to empower staff through training. For example, the Marriot Hotel wants to train staff "to be flexible and to think on their feet, to look at problem-solving techniques, and to espouse open communication". They want their staff to be "trained to make a guest feel comfortable, to be flexible, to anticipate needs, to be consistent, and to achieve a perfect balance of friendliness and respect". And they understand that "the reputation the hotel enjoys for the quality of its service comes down to making staff feel happy to be at work and proud of their jobs". Meanwhile, the General Manager of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel has stated publicly that the hotel needs to recruit "people who like variety...flexible people who have a desire to grow...people who have a good attitude towards themselves, feel good about themselves, and want to be a part of a team".

Turning from the training philosophies of hotel managers to hotel recruitment advertisements, a survey has shown a high degree of correspondence between the market standard of the hotels and the language used in such advertisements. Hotels in the higher market sectors tend to use language that is more individual-oriented, and that focuses more on the personal career development of the potential recruit; while those in the lower market sectors tend to be more management-oriented

in the language used, and focus more on the functional operations of the hotel establishment.

Many of the hotel staff recruitment advertisements that we have collected from newspapers in Hong Kong take a traditional approach. Emphasis is placed on the instrumental skills needed for specific, functional operations; on work experience expressed in terms of length of service in similar positions; and on the salary, fringe benefits and career advancement opportunities that the organization will make available to successful applicants. Some start with statements about the size of the organization and the scale of its operation. Others open with a more or less formulaic statement to the effect that they are looking for people with motivation and enthusiasm to join the dynamic team of a successful operation, before lapsing into something more mundane. There are a relatively small number of exceptions: the Century Hong Kong Hotel, for example, has an advertisement that promotes at length the hotel's organizational commitment to "providing...guests with the highest quality service", to "caring for people", and to "the community...through charity events" before going on to list the job openings in a less prominent part of the advertising space.

We have also examined the *1993 Graduates' Yearbook* of the Hong Kong Polytechnic's Hotel and Tourism Department. In the opening message, the Director of the Polytechnic notes that the Yearbook provides an interface between the hotel industry and students graduating from the Polytechnic's hospitality training courses, by formally introducing the hospitality graduates to the industry. There are a number of advertisements in the Yearbook from hotels welcoming the 1993 graduates to the industry by offering information on career opportunities.

It is possible to group the advertisements into three categories. Those in the first category give priority to information on salaries and other employee benefits. One of these advertisements invites graduates to join, provides details of hotel size and geographical location, and follows this with a number of testimonials from former trainees praising the quality of the training experience. Another highlights its direct access to Hong Kong's underground train system and the convenience this offers. A further advertisement simply offers a long list of staff benefits. Advertisements in this first category tend to adopt fairly conventional

wording and style, and emphasize an instrumental exchange relationship between the employer and the employee.

Hotels in the second category make use of very specific interpersonal elements to help convey instrumental, functional information. These include personal messages from and photographs of past graduates from the Polytechnic's hospitality training courses to prove that the hotels offers attractive career opportunities for those graduating. One advertisement features 27 individual photographs of alumni now occupying managerial positions, under the slogan "Join us now, one day you will be there!" Another is headed: "The human touch - the genuine concern for both our guests and our fellow colleagues", with further information presented in the form of a handwritten letter from a 1992 graduate, and with the outline of a human hand reaching out in the background.

Particularly interesting is the third category of advertisements, which uses language that is explicitly people-oriented, appealing to more abstract notions of professionalism and personal development. For example, the Hilton Hotel emphasizes the Hilton promise to offer a world of career excellence and to respond to guests' needs, then suggests that hospitality graduates should plan their careers early and choose an employer that suits them. The message from the Conrad Hotel connects "work" and "reward" with "style" and "pleasure", and states explicitly that the hotel gives priority to people over facilities. The Grand Hyatt Hotel also highlights the importance of having the best people on the staff of a top hotel, and promises a "Grand career".

A survey of hotel promotion campaigns in Hong Kong has also revealed a similar correspondence between market positioning and the advertising language used. In general, luxury hotels in the higher market sectors tend to emphasize the human face of the hotel staff, as well as a sense of simplicity and of a personal touch in the provision of services. Those in relatively lower market sectors tend to highlight functional efficiency and glamorous facilities.

Training for personal communication

We would suggest that the quality of an EFL programme for personnel in the hotel and hospitality industries can be evaluated in terms of its

success in:

(i) developing the learners' awareness of the cultural significance of industry-specific communicative strategies such as those considered above; and

(ii) transferring the necessary cultural competence to the learners to enable them to participate appropriately in industry-specific contexts.

Research studies and professional experience in hospitality work clearly indicate that perceptions of hotel service quality are increasingly being determined by the quality of the guest's experience during the relatively brief face-to-face interaction with service staff in service encounters. In contrast, the physically tangible aspects of the hospitality service product have become less important (Lundberg 1991), a tendency that is particularly the case in the context of up-market hospitality establishments, where the quality of the accommodation, catering and business facilities are often taken for granted. It has been noted (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990) that guests are most likely to evaluate service quality in terms of the staff's:

(i) degree of responsiveness in helping customers;
(ii) inclination to assure customers about their ability to perform their tasks; and
(iii) efforts invested in achieving empathetic understanding of customer needs and in giving customers individualized attention.

In the hospitality industry, it is the nature and quality of communication during the service encounter that establishes - and confirms - guests' expectations about the quality of the hospitality product. Guests invariably judge on the basis of one or more of the various dimensions of service quality whether or not they are getting value for money in the service transaction. To enable guests to perceive quality, it is essential to provide adequate relevant information on the services being offered and on the range of choices available, so that they have a reasonable basis on which to make comparisons and to take decisions in relation to their personal circumstances.

Information is often the primary factor that distinguishes the satisfactory service encounter from the unsatisfactory (Bitner 1990). With the quality of the hospitality product increasingly being evaluated on the communicative dimensions of the service transaction, it is crucial for service staff also to focus more on the interpersonal dimensions of their relationship with guests. Personalizing the provision of information requires the *flexible* use of communication to develop an understanding of guests' attitudes and behaviour. In order to establish this more personalized understanding, it is often necessary to use uncertainty-reduction strategies, such as questioning and self-disclosure, to match the expectations service staff and guests have of each other. Reducing staff's uncertainty about guests as unique individuals increases their confidence in anticipating the guests' needs, and in meeting those needs more successfully. Reducing guests' uncertainty about service staff also enables guests to feel more at ease in making their needs known, and hence to achieve more effective communication.

Language training for culture transfer

We are proposing a strategy of **communication accommodation** in the hospitality service encounter as a way to achieve quality service (Sparks & Callan 1992). This involves giving service staff the necessary training in communication to enable them to work towards an appropriate degree of communicative convergence with the guest. Communicative convergence will ensure that both the service staff and the guest have an adequate degree of shared, mutual understanding of their respective roles in the service transaction. This will reduce the likelihood of the guest experiencing dissatisfaction due to discrepancy between the expectation and the actual service provision.

The most important aspect of communication convergence in the hospitality service encounter is the staff's initiative in demonstrating a positive service attitude through the use of affiliative skills when interacting with guests. The aim of such affiliative communication is for the service staff to be seen to be willing to converge towards the guest's culture, and to show that they are doing so in order to make the guest feel welcome and at ease in a strange environment.

Attempts to achieve convergence must not, however, be made in such a way as to lead to negative perceptions. Part of the push for professionalism in the service industry comes from the professionalization of the client base - and people from professional backgrounds tend to appreciate cultural diversity. Professional service staff, then, will be those who are:

(i) capable of understanding guests' cultural values;
(ii) confident in themselves as personal representatives of the local culture; and
(iii) able to articulate the cultural differences between the guest and the host community.

Training in cross-cultural communication should therefore be made an integral part of EFL for the hospitality industry. Cross-cultural training is particularly appropriate at a time when the hotel industry is encountering increased multicultural diversity in terms of ownership, work force and client base. Involvement with individuals of diverse behavioural and attitudinal orientations makes multicultural training of service staff essential. Training for cross-cultural management in the hospitality industry will enable personnel to take advantage of cultural diversity as a human resource rather than viewing it as a barrier to communication (Welch & Welch 1987; Welch *et al.* 1988).

Multicultural awareness broadens one's range of strategies for understanding and for getting oneself understood. It also increases one's ability to explain the many ways in which culture influences perceptions. To train hospitality service staff to understand guests' needs, it is important to encourage them to examine their own value orientations and their expectations about guests' needs and behaviour, including their stereotypical impressions about guests in general and about guests from particular social groups and countries.

A foreign language curriculum for hospitality and tourism students will have to integrate language with culture by placing the emphasis on cultural understanding rather than on the mechanical mastery of language skills for narrow instrumental, functional purposes (Whyte 1990). The curriculum will aim to promote skills that enable service staff to develop the competence to articulate their own personal cultural values in a language that guests from overseas can understand. It will also involve

the critical examination of the learners' own ideological orientations as a necessary experiential step in acquiring a foreign language (Dore 1988; Brogger 1992).

Conclusion

In this paper, we have made use of the concept of "culture transfer" in three related senses. We have argued that effective EFL teaching for the hospitality industry must take into consideration these three senses of "culture transfer":

(i) Language teaching for the world of work must aim at the successful transfer of language skills learnt in the classroom to the workplace.

(ii) The changing cultural values of the hospitality industry must be understood and transferred to the culture of the English classroom.

(iii) Culture transfer between service staff and guest must be seen as an integral aspect of foreign language use in communicative interaction in the professional service encounter.

With these three points in mind, we believe that the traditional drilling of formulaic expressions will gradually diminish in importance in the hospitality English classroom. Our students on day-release courses have told us that their managers are already asking them to avoid using over-standardized expressions when interacting with guests. Moreover, when asked what guests from overseas most like to talk to them about, the students invariably respond that most ask them about their personal feelings concerning the transfer of the colony back to China in 1997. It will certainly not be sufficient to train these students to repeat parrot fashion the official line that the situation in Hong Kong will remain unchanged for 50 years.

We suggest that in quality hospitality service provision it is necessary to see the guest and the front-line staff as the principal stakeholders. Foreign language trainers of staff in international hospitality establishments may find it more appropriate to construe teaching/learning as a linguistic

experience of culture transfer between people from different cultural backgrounds, rather than view language training as drilling in standardized expressions - a trap into which fast-expanding hospitality chains may easily fall.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AELC	*Australian English Language Course*
ALC	*American Language Course*
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DITC	Defence International Training Centre (*Australia*)
DTE	Department of Teacher Education
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EL	English language
ELT	English Language Training
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
IALF	Indonesia Australia Language Foundation
L1	First language
LOTE	Languages other than English
MS	Manuscript
NESB	Non-English-speaking background
PDR	People's Democratic Republic
RELC	Regional Language Centre (*Singapore*)
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
SEAMES	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Secretariat
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
TCS	Total Customer Service
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TQM	Total Quality Management
USIS	United States Information Service